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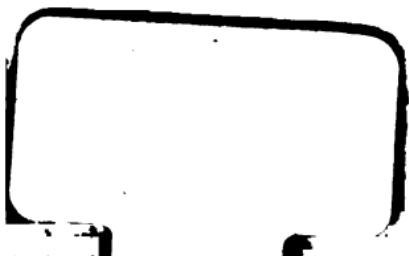
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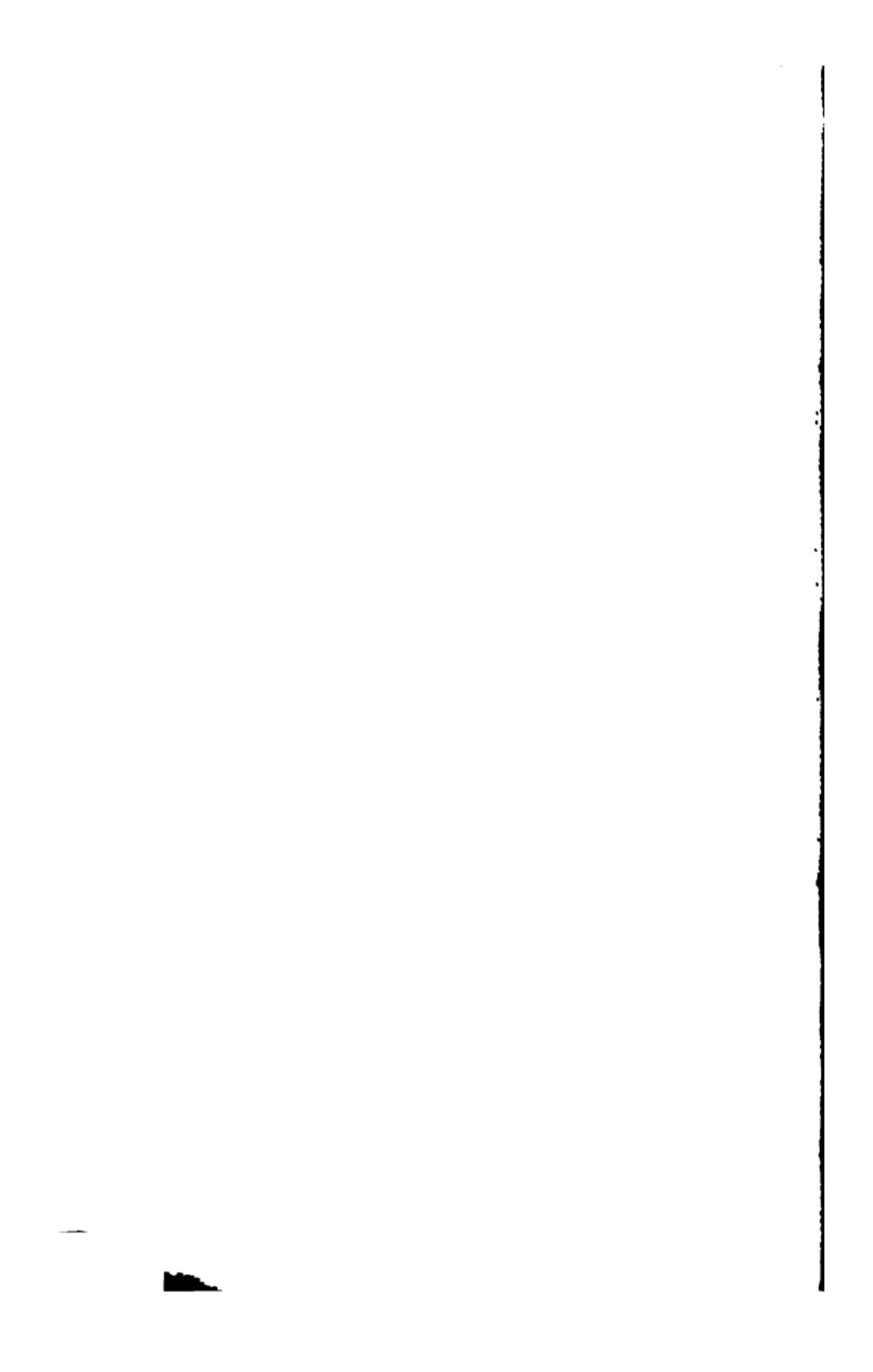
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THE
FRIEND OF WOMEN:

TRANSLATED

FROM THE FRENCH

OF

BOURDIER DE VILLEMERT,

BY ALEXANDER MORRICE.

PUBLISHED

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AMERICAN AND
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TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

CAROLINE,

PRINCESS OF WALES.

MOST AMIABLE PRINCESS,

In dedicating this small Treatise to your Royal Highness, which is intended to raise the Female Sex to their entitled rank in Society, I was influenced by two motives: Mankind always look up to and endeavour to imitate those whom Nature has placed in exalted situations, and closely adopt either their virtues or their vices. Your Royal Highness, in quitting your Friends and Country to bless this happy Kingdom, brought with you that amiable simplicity of manners, which only requires you to be known to insure you universal love. I

would not add one word that might wound your delicate sensibility, and I have not the vanity to suppose that any thing I can say can add to your Royal Highness's reputation; but this Work required a Dedication to some exalted character, who resembled that which it recommends. It is not that I am dazzled by the glare of rank or establishment; but when I witnessed, at *Charlton*, the old, the lame, and distressed cottager, with tears of gratitude, calling for blessings from Heaven on your Royal Highness, who, laying aside Pomp, deigned to enter the lowly habitation of Penury and Want, and lighten the afflictions of your distressed fellow-creatures, it was for god-like private acts like these that I selected your Royal Highness to dedicate this Work to. You, most amiable Princess, have found the key to the hearts of Britons, who, although naturally rough and unpolished, if once their affections are awakened by tenderness and a wish to ameliorate their conditions, there is not a danger or hard-



ship they think too great to requite their benefactor.—In this virtue you resemble his Majesty, who may truly be called the Father of his People;—and when, in due time, you and his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales shall ascend the Throne of these Kingdoms, that he may concentrate the affections of all his Subjects, and convince surrounding nations that Britons have but one heart, and that their King ranks in their affections, is second to none but their God, is the sincere wish and hearty prayer of one who is entirely devoted to every branch of the Royal Family,—and who begs leave, with the greatest respect, to subscribe himself,

Your Royal Highness's

Most obedient

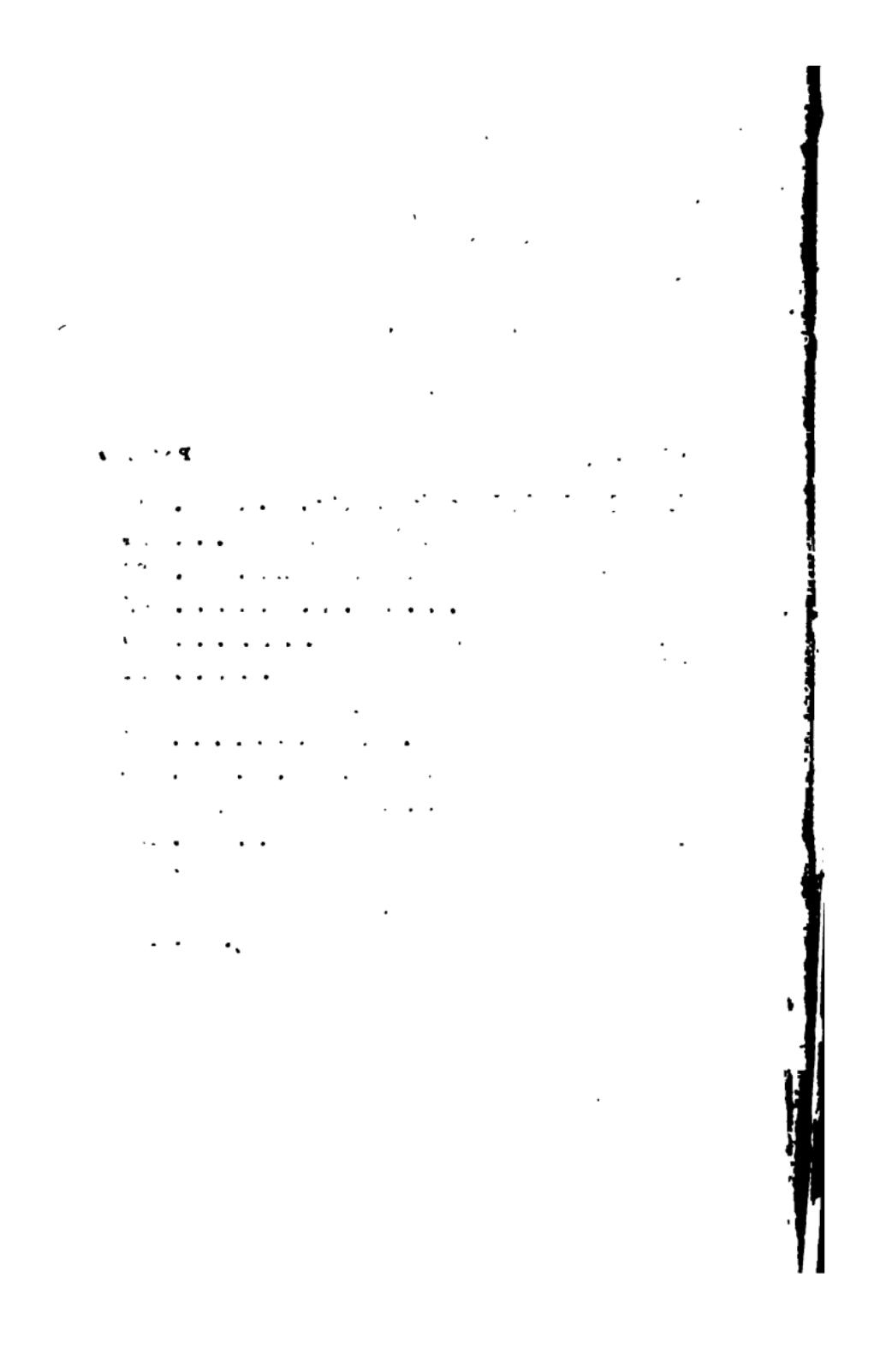
And humble Servant,

ALEXANDER MORRICE.

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THE
FRIEND OF WOMEN.

TOO much good or too much evil has always been ascribed to women: man, submissive to the empire of beauty, sees in them the queens of the universe, and the masterpieces of nature; whilst the morose and melancholy man looks upon them as so many *Pandoras*,* to whom they impute all

* *Pandora*, was a celebrated and lovely woman, made by all the gods, in the following manner. Prometheus, the son of Japetus, one of the Titans, having animated some statues that he had formed of clay, with fire (which, by the assistance of Minerva, he had stolen from Heaven), irritated Jupiter in such a manner, that he chained him to Mount Caucasus, by means of Vulcan,

the ills that afflict the human race. It is thus that *spite, or love*, blinding men, has been the reason of their addressing to them either ridiculous eulogiums or unjust lampoons.

Every one speaks of this sex according to the disposition of his heart; and the most

where a vulture perpetually gnawing his liver, which growing every day as it was consumed, made his torment everlasting. The other gods, unwilling to suffer Jupiter alone to create man, all agreed to form a perfect woman, who should be endowed with gifts by them and the goddesses. Pallas, therefore, gave her wisdom; Venus, beauty and the art of pleasing; Apollo, the knowledge of music; Mercury eloquence; and Minerva gave her the most rich and splendid ornaments—and thence came the name of Pandora, which is composed of two Greek words, which mean all gifts. Jupiter, after this, under pretence of bestowing upon her some endowment, as the other gods had done, gave her a box, with orders to carry it to Prometheus. Prometheus, his brother, imprudently opened it; and, in a moment, all the evils of Nature which it contained were spread over the earth, and which, from that fatal moment, have never ceased to afflict the human race—Hope, alone, remained in the box. This was the cause of the iron age.

vicious men are those who are most disposed to paint them in odious colours.

Whatever opposition we meet with in the different opinions of men with regard to women, the lively interest with which they regard them is always the principal. Every thing which this lovely half of the human race does, has a right to interest us—their gestures, carriage, tone of voice, and smallest movements, charm us.

Neither is it required, to be able to judge fairly of them, that we ought to be quite uninterested with regard to them; such a disposition would render a man deserving of pity and, happily, is but seldom met with: but we should not be agitated by violent passions; and whoever only sees women through the clouds of a mad passion, or the black vapours of jealousy, can only form a very false idea of them.

It is, then, neither enthusiastic lovers, nor discontented husbands, whom we should consult upon this important subject:

both are equally objectionable judges, and we must seek more judicious ones.

There are many men, who, born with tender passions, know how to unite gaiety with decency in the company of women they esteem: *these* are the men whom we should listen to.

All agree in acknowledging the happiest qualities in the sex, which only want a little culture to be rendered valuable.

It is certain that Nature places women in a state to appear to advantage much sooner than us.

A young person of fifteen years of age feels and expresses with ingenuity, and makes one of the charms of a society, into which a man of the same age could not be admitted.

Like those forward trees, which, only opposing to the sap a tender and light bark, are covered with leaves and blossoms a long time before others have even felt the approach of spring, women, thus disposed to a ready developement, have much less need

than us of the assistance of art to attain the degree of perfection of which they are capable.

And let it not be thought that this degree is much inferior to our's. Many among them can bear a comparison with respect to the mind, and the greater part take the lead in point of the qualities of the heart. There are, without doubt, some faults in them: they are marked, like us, with the stamp of humanity; but a great number of virtues may very well excuse these small faults; faults, indeed, for the greater part of which they are indebted to the men—the desire of pleasing, natural to the sex, leading them to regulate themselves by the ideas imbibed from among the men who surround them.

The chief misfortune of women, as well as of the great, is their being beset, from the most tender age, by a crowd of flatterers, who are interested in concealing the truth from them.—It is an inconvenience for beau-

ty to have near them a set of superficial and idle people.

These men, attentive to feed in women a childish vanity of which they mean to take advantage, put every art in practice to divert their minds from serious thought.

Surrounded by such men, whose smallest fault is that of being frivolous, is it surprising that women should become so themselves? If any thing ought to surprise us, should it not rather be to see so many estimable females remain, when all things conspire to stifle the happy dispositions they have received from Nature?

The best means, then, of reforming the women, would be to reclaim the men.

An illustrious citizen, zealous for the honour and good of his country, tried, a short time back, to rectify the ideas of his fellow-citizens, and to snatch from among them even the principle of ill. The friend of man is necessarily the friend of woman, since the well understood interests of the one sex are closely united with those of the

FRIEND OF WOMEN.

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other. Whilst waiting the effect of his wise counsels, I venture, after his example, to address to my female fellow-citizens some observations on what they owe to themselves, and what society requires of them. There are books enough printed every day to corrupt them—it is necessary to offer something as an ~~antidote~~.

DIVISION
OF THE SUBJECT.

I SHALL inquire relatively to the rank they hold among us; what is the kind of study and occupation that belongs to them; of the particular pleasures, among which are ranked luxury and dress. I shall, then, proceed to some reflections on love, marriage, and the education of children. I shall, as I go along, treat of the domestic government that naturally belongs to women, and finish with a small picture of their virtues, less uncommon than it pleases some persons to give them credit for. My object is, in few words, to offer to the observation of women, truth, which custom seems de-

sirous of proscribing. If sometimes they have contributed to multiply our wanderings, it is frequently reserved for them to reclaim us. Women can do every thing they dare to undertake: those who have sufficient elevation of soul to preserve this advantage over us, revenge themselves for our pride by an inestimable benefit; and their charms only become more powerful over those men who deserve this name.

CHAP. I.

RANK OF WOMEN IN SOCIETY.

THOSE who only consider women as beautiful figures placed here for embellishment and pleasure, have but a very imperfect idea of them. They are, repeat it to them without ceasing, the charming flowers destined to heighten the colouring of the universe!—Who doubts it? But exhort them, at the same time, not to suffer themselves to be seduced by these pretty amorous ditties; let them beware of being satisfied with possessing these superficial advantages. There are already but too many among them, who, contented with this advantage, seem to have renounced every other employment but that of captivating the senses. Women have quite another destination; they are created for a more noble purpose than being held up to public shew.

Their charms are but the promise of more enchanting qualities. To reduce them merely to beauties, is degrading them, and almost levelling them with their pictures. They who possess beauty only may make an agreeable figure in a chair of state, and decorate a drawing-room. They are agreeable to look at (to speak literally); but it is necessary that women should possess something more than mere beauty to derive all the advantages from the intercourse with them that we have a right to expect.

The commerce between well-informed persons cannot be limited to the indifferent view of person, or the insipid conversation of vanity and falsehood.

She who has not a tendency to make us better, tends to corrupt us. If women, who form the ornaments of it, would unite to the graces of the body a proper judgment and an upright heart, the affection we bear towards them could not fail of unfolding many dormant excellent qualities in us. Let them but direct their minds to great ob-

jects, and they will cause the seeds of every virtue to spring up in men.

That empire which beauty holds over us was only given them for the benefit of the whole human race. Man, destined for valiant feats, has in his character a certain harshness which is reserved for women to correct: there is in their manner, still more than in their features, a softness that is capable of bending this natural haughtiness.

It may be said, if we lived far from women, we should be quite different from what we are: the trouble we take to obtain their good graces polishes and softens that harsh manner that is natural to us. Their gaiety serves as a counterpoise to our serious and austere turn: in a word, man would be less perfect and less happy if he did not associate with women.

The man insensible to the charms of their commerce is seldom the friend of humanity: he preserves an inflexibility which renders even his virtues dangerous.

The great qualities of Charles the Twelfth had not troubled all Europe, if this prince had lived a little more in the company of women, alone capable of assuaging his untractable spirit.

If it is necessary that men should be in some degree softened by the tender cares of women, they have need, in turn, of the conversation of men to brighten their vivacity, and to cure them of that negligence to which they would abandon themselves, if they were not animated by the desire of pleasing. This desire produces allurement in their countenances, grace in their deportment, and sweetness in their voice; whether they speak, move, or smile, they think of rendering themselves amiable; from whence we may conclude, that it is, in some degree, men who give charms to the women, who, without them, would fall into an indolent or churlish disposition. Moreover, the mind of women, oppressed by the number of trifling particulars, would languish in

ignorance, if the men, by recalling them to more elevated objects, did not communicate to them vigour, and exalt them.

Thus it is that each sex should be improved by the other. The masculine courage of the one is tempered by the pliancy of the other, which, on its part, borrows from that same courage. The ideas of men take a more delicate turn in the company of women, whilst the latter, by being with them, lose every thing that is trifling. Their different qualities are thus poised: and, from this union, a happy accord arises which renders both more accomplished.

The difference which we find in dispositions may be compared to that which is met with in voice. We should rather form an agreeable concert than a disagreeable discordance.

If men possess a more vigorous mind, it is, that they may more effectually assist towards the happiness of those who possess one more delicate. But one sex was never

formed to be the oppressor of the other: the close intercourse between them renders their advantages mutual; and the ridiculous debates of superiority are a kind of injury done to nature, and a want of acknowledging its benefits.

We are born the friends of women, *and not their rivals*, still less their tyrants.

To reduce them to slavery, is to use that strength against them which is given us to defend them, and rob society of what forms its sweetest charm: it becomes insipid, if we banish from it that part of the human race which is the most proper to animate it.

This is what the eastern nations have experienced, who, uniting to a beastly passion an opinion of their weakness, have looked upon women as dangerous companions, against whom it was necessary to fortify themselves: they have enslaved them, for fear of being enslaved by them: they have considered that loving them too much was a sufficient excuse for wronging them.

These imperious masters have been the first victims to their tyrannical jealousy. Given up to a sorrowful and isolated life, in the midst of their lovely slaves, they have in vain sought for affection. Affection, and the delicate pleasure that accompanies it, is only to be found where liberty reigns: both fly from a society that wants resources to inspire it.

These people wish to indemnify themselves by a coarse sensuality; but they have only benumbed their senses, and brutalized their souls.

So far from such barbarity, the French nation has always paid women an homage, which has, perhaps, exceeded its proper bounds. The ancient Gauls paid them the greatest honours, and established a council of women, which decided upon the greatest affairs. The Roman gallantry succeeded it; and has been followed by another sort of gallantry, which made women the judges of the merit and bravery of men.

Ancient chivalry, which passed from the Moors to our ancestors, covered, during a time, all our nobility with the liveries of their ladies, and induced them to run the greatest dangers to merit a glance from their eyes.

A riband given in a tournament was then a prize for which they would risk every thing; and the approbation of a lovely woman who gave it, paid the men for their labour, and induced them to undertake greater.

It costs less, in the present day, to obtain the good graces of this sex.

It is not the greatest intrepidity, or elevation of soul, that makes men favourites with the women: *little attentions*, minute compliances, and a servile imitation, is sufficient to become a favourite.

Women, thrown by us into a vortex of continual dissipation, for which they are not made, have contracted a relish for frivolity, and have made it the *ton*. They

have so long enslaved the men to their caprices, that they find themselves confounded with them in the same labyrinth.

Luxury having quite effeminated all, if I may be allowed to say it, the contrast placed by Nature between the sexes has disappeared; and the one can only find in the other a weakness capable of augmenting its own.

Women are become a kind of animated idols, whose worshippers have copied all their gestures: they have lavished upon them mean flattery at the expense of truth —Heaven is in their eyes, and life and death in their hands. Our public shows seem devoted to the perpetuating the mysteries of this ridiculous adulation; and we do not cease paying women a lewd adoration, which leads them on to depravity. Vice distempers and attacks the whole of society.

For want of having formed the hearts of those whom we are desirous of pleasing,

this wish is now become destructive to us, and their attractions are fatal.

Let women renounce these perfidious worshippers, who are the disgrace of their sex and our own: let them cease to be the public objects of an adoration that discredits them. They are beautifully formed to be loved, and to form the greatest charm in a well ordered society; but, called to a tranquil life, they should not be abandoned to that whirlwind of idle men who flutter daily around them. Their favours, by being seldom communicated, would make but the greater impression.

I should be very sorry to live among a people, who, like our neighbours of the south, deprive women of society; but I think it would benefit women to live a little in the shade of retirement, and not be more abroad than is necessary to enjoy the pleasure of being restored to their family and themselves.

It is the vulgar crowd whose converse is to be dreaded; and I would advise the wo-

men to avoid them, if they wish to keep clear of a contagious air.

But it is very beneficial to them, and us, that they should not exclude themselves from a calm and select society. In such an intercourse, far from making an exchange of vices, it becomes a useful alliance of pleasure and virtue. The minds of the men would be polished without being enervated; and the women, in refining our pleasures, would communicate to us that sweetness which makes them obtain whatever they desire.

They are the soul of society, to which they give whatever form they please

Courts have often changed according to the characters of the women who held the first rank in them. That of Louis XIVth was indebted for a part of its allurements to the great number of ladies who always graced it; and attained the highest polish during the time that Henrietta of England and the Duchess of Bourgogne, embellished it.

Women not only know how to brighten society, but they may be regarded as the main spring which gives it action. It is true, that the administration of affairs, and the different branches of government, are in the hands of men; but this distribution only secures more positively the interest of women.

The human species, acting more from the heart than principle, in whatever hands the power is, it is always at the disposal of those they love. I do not know if this is a weakness; if it is, it is a natural one.

Where women command, men reign; and where the latter are clothed with the trappings of power, they are the more frequently but a kind of second cause, and receive from women the first impulse. This reign of women is not a bad one, if they possess ideas worthy of the rank they hold among us.

Let them but elevate their ideas, and labour to extend the sphere of their thoughts, they would then be able to furnish us with useful advice: they are endowed with a

vivacity that makes them catch objects which escape us: and sometimes they are capable of the same courage as the most intrepid.

The English were never more powerful than under Queen Elizabeth. We have, at this moment, two great empires in Europe governed by women, whom we may rank with the greatest kings. We discover in them, concealed under the agreeable features of their sex, the great qualities of Charles the Fifth and Peter the Great.

The misfortune is, that women pay too little attention to what is valuable to them. They employ uselessly the whole of their lives with a beauty to which they can add nothing, and give themselves no trouble to cultivate their minds—it is an excellent soil which they suffer to lay fallow. “Their last sigh,” said saint Evremond, “is more for the loss of beauty than the loss of life.”

Let them, then, learn that beauty merits our homage no further than as it accompa-

nies a lovely soul. Nature hardly ever clothes any thing with charms but what is useful—a fair fruit is rarely a poison. Thus a lovely woman of a vicious disposition is a monster in Nature.

CHAP. II.

OF THE STUDIES SUITABLE TO WOMEN.

To prohibit women from any kind of study, is to treat them as Mahomet did, who, in order to render them more voluptuous, judged it convenient to deny their having any soul. The major part of them conduct themselves as if they themselves had adopted a doctrine so injurious to their sex, and appear to place no value on that lively and penetrating genius which is far more useful than beauty.

When we recollect the happy dispositions of women, and the success of some of them, we cannot see, without chagrin, the little value they set upon their understandings; nevertheless, it would cost them but little to mature it.

They are prime vaulters, as Montagne says; and the finesse of their flights makes them catch readily, and without labour, the relative connexion of objects among themselves. It is a pity that a blameable indifference stifles in them the noblest gifts.

However powerful their charms may be to attract us, they will not be sufficient to hold us. The habit of seeing a fine face will weaken in a short time the impression of it.

When we are at a loss what to say to a handsome person, ennui soon gets the better of the taste we had for her; and it is this ennui, caused by the barrenness of the ideas of some women, which is the cause of that inconstancy of which they so frequently accuse us.

Let women judge of the difference which is met with among themselves by that which they themselves make between a silly fellow who wearies them, and a well-informed man who amuses them. A little study might place them above this latter, and

make them possess this advantage—it is a kind of conquest we wish they would make over us. We shall see them, without jealousy, partake of a good that is always much better than what it costs to obtain.

The more they extend their knowledge, the greater will be the intercourse between them and us, and likewise the more interesting and animating.

There are a number of things lost for want of being able to communicate them, and which would increase our pleasure when we found women disposed to relish them.

But what are the objects to which women can reasonably apply themselves? To this I answer, and I beg the ladies to pardon me for it, that, among all the sciences which exercise the wonderful activity of the human mind, there are but some few which are within their reach.

They ought to avoid abstruse sciences and thorny researches, the particulars of which oppress their minds, and blunt that ingenuity for which they are so celebrated.

If there are to be found among this sex a Dacier or a Chatelet, they are scarce examples, more to be admired than imitated. It is necessary for women to possess a less dazzling knowledge, which will be more in unison with their disposition.

The knowledge which they imbibe should be useful for practice in life: and I see nothing so disagreeable among them as those female theologians, who, devoted to a party whose aversions they adopt, assemble at their houses ridiculous convocations, and form extravagant sects. A Bourignon, a virgin of Venice, a Madam Guyon, are more disagreeable characters than female epicures,—like Ninon de l'Enclos.

We will not suffer the women to partake of any thing but what we know to be the most flattering and sure.

All that can awaken their curiosity, and give assistance to their imaginations, is more calculated for them than us. It is a pretty extended field where they, conjunctively

with us, may exercise their minds: they can even surpass us, without humbling us. Physic and history may alone furnish women with an agreeable kind of study. The first, not in what it has of systematical, but in a succession of observations and skilful experiments, offers a subject well worthy of the attention of a reasonable being. But it is in vain that Nature tenders her wonders to the greater part of women, who pay no attention to any thing but to trifles. She is mute for them who know not how to examine her.

It, however, needs but a moderate attention to be struck with the admirable harmony which reigns in every part of the universe, and a desire to know the springs of it. It is the great book which is open to us all, and which two fine eyes may read, without fatiguing them, in the country, and in every place. Women cannot be too much encouraged to raise their thoughts there, which they but too often lower upon objects that are unworthy of them.

Women are much more capable of attention than people think: they want nothing but the applying it properly. There are few young women who have not read with avidity a great number of romances and childish story books, only fit to hurt the mind. If they had devoted the same time to the study of history, they would have found, in the various scenes which this world affords, the most interesting facts, together with an instruction that truth only can give.

This species of picture which the annals of the human race presents, is very proper to form the judgment and the heart. Women, in all ages, have had a great share in events, and have played so many different parts, that they may look upon our archives as their own. Many among them have even written memoirs of the various events which they have seen. Madame de Montpensier, Madame de Nemours, Madame de Mott-Ville, Lady Louisa Manners, Mrs. Barbauld, Mrs. Piozzi (late Mrs. Thrale),

Mrs Smith, Miss Hannah More, &c. &c. are of this description. Christina of Pisan, daughter of the astronomer of Charles V, has written the life of this Prince; and, a long time before her, the Princess Anne Comnena had reduced into order the history of her time. The women are invited to reclaim their rights, and to drain from history useful lessons for their conduct in life.

This study is as amusing as profitable, and conducts naturally to the arts, which it would be good for women to know a little less superficially than they do. They have charms enough in themselves, and want no recommendation with the sex: all the object proposed, is, to shew that they form an analogy with the women, and are like them, adorned with the most brilliant colouring.

The mind is always agreeably recreated by the images presented to it by painting, music, and poetry, especially if they are in accord with good morals. These three charming arts, during the last reign, render-

ed Mademoiselle Cheron celebrated, who united in herself the talents of Sappho, of the M**, and of Rosalba.

It is, in some degree, to procure for one's self a fresh sense, by familiarizing ourselves with the arts. They have so agreeably imitated Nature, and have even so frequently embellished it, that whoever cultivates them will find there a fruitful source of new pleasures. It is advisable to procure for one's self a resource against ennui, by this addition to our natural riches; and we cannot, without stupidity, refuse to become the proprietors of the number of flattering objects which they have created.

Be not afraid that the pains women take to instruct themselves in all these objects can be prejudicial to the natural graces of their minds. These embellishments, on the contrary, will be but better relished.

There is nothing equals the society of a woman who is more curious in the adorning her mind than in decking out her person. In the company of such women, every thing

becomes interesting, and receives a finish, which belongs only to them to give. The charming art of saying ingenious things “avec naïveté” is peculiar to themselves. They brighten the minds of men, and communicate to them an elegant ease which they can never possess in the closet.

What resource, on the contrary, can an uncultivated mind furnish? They seek in vain to fill up the blank in their conversation by frivolous toying: they have soon exhausted the barren fund of daily news, of compliments, and of trifles; they have, at last, recourse to the murdering shafts of slander: it is necessary, unless they make a short visit. A commerce which has not any solid foundation, can only be either frivolous or criminal.

There is but one way to render it more interesting and more variegated: let but women, who take the lead in our circles, condescend to form their taste and encourage useful reading. Their merit will cause that swarm of thoughtless persons (who com-

pel them to be as contemptible as themselves) to disappear: more estimable men will be glad to form a society about them more worthy of the name of good company.

In this new circle they will gain on the score of friendship, without losing any thing in point of cheerfulness. Merit is not naturally sorrowful; on the contrary, there is generally found among polite, well-bred people, a mild serenity far preferable to the bursts of stupid and ignorant merriment.

Those charming societies where a La Fayette, a Sevigne, a La Sabliere, met with Les Vivonnes, the La Rochefoucaults, the La Fares, assuredly equalled our societies of the present day: they were, in the meantime, very instructive: and they knew how to treat upon sublime subjects in a pleasant strain.

In short I repeat to the fair sex, that the only means of pleasing, and of continuing to do so for a long time, is not to limit themselves to the catalogue of novels, or the designs of a fire-screen, but to possess them-

selves of a fund of ideas which strengthen the mind.

The worth acquired forms an allurement that is not liable to fade like the lilies and roses and which prolongs the reign of a pretty woman even till the autumn of life: what beauty has begun, acquirements perpetuate.

If women would not confine themselves to shine but for a morning, they would perfect their faculties by a little study and conversation with well-informed men. This is husbanding a resource which will some day set solitude at defiance, and unite in themselves the advantages of both sexes.

Happily for us the day is past when prejudice condemned the women, as well as the nobility, to a rustic ignorance.

The ridicule thrown upon a pedantic knowledge had so much discredited all knowledge, that many women prided themselves in clipping the words of their language. But there has always been ~~found~~ women, who, freeing themselves from the prejudices of fashion, have dared to think

and speak reasonably; and we see, in the present day, many who do not blush at being better informed than the greater part of our *petits maîtres*, or court gentry.

But of all studies, the most necessary and most natural to women is the study of men. As their government is that of persuasion, it is necessary for them to know the main secret-springs that can actuate him, to whom the laws have subjected them.

It is also a study in which they will succeed the best. Judges of all our thoughts, they know our natural dispositions far better than ourselves, and give it the impulse that pleases them. It is by this art that they make us do whatever they wish, and that the strongest is in fact governed by the weakest.

CHAP. III.

OF THE OCCUPATIONS OF WOMEN.

A woman walks everywhere with a work-bag always close shut, which figures at her side in company, at public shews, and even at church.

It is an homage they pay to labour ; it is a confession that they look upon it as a duty. For my part, I think it very blameable to continue such a vain shew, which cannot save them from the wearisomeness of idleness.

Labour is a law of Nature, the observance of which adds to the fame and happiness of human beings.

Rank, fortune, sex, *nor any reason*, can make it be dispensed with ; and nothing is more deserving of contempt than that lan-

guor of the soul which inclines it to fly from itself. To do nothing, is, as far as they can, to sink into non-existence.

How then, is it, that our ladies dare, without blushing, share with a laborious husband the honours which society pays to his works, whilst they pass their days in an idleness that is ruinous to themselves and family? Do they not think that they owe good offices, to compensate for those they receive?

If rank or fortune frees them from the numerous labours which overwhelm persons of more contracted fortune, they are not excused from the general law.

Placed in another sphere, there are required other tasks from them, proportioned to their education and rank.

Upon these principles I beg our fashionable ladies to judge themselves fairly; for we must grant that the common people do more in this respect than their duty; but for the greater part of the others, they appear to me to abuse life, and that it is a struggle

among them who shall murder that time the most, which they afterwards uselessly regret.

What is called a woman of fashion (Ha! who does not form one of that number in the present day?), gets up not very early in the morning, passes the rest of it at the toilette, or often receives visits in a dishabille *more* than gallant. After dinner, they dress for the play or the promenade: go from thence to glitter at a supper, and return to sleep at a late hour, in order to run the next day the same equally useless career.

This train of life leaves still too much time at the disposal of women. Ingenious in wasting it, they have introduced a game which wonderfully fills up these voids: they have also, by this means, increased their society, and assembled a company so much more numerous, that the blockhead and the man of merit are indiscriminately placed round a quadrille table.

It is absolutely necessary, say our lovely gamesters, that we should have some

amusement. Nothing is more proper; but cannot they find one more noble than contending for money, and labouring to increase the desire of gain which is already too strong? Moreover, is that regular sitting an amusement, which occupies four or five hours every day, that is more than the third of life, without any other conversation than that caused by the spots, red or black, impressed upon the paper?

This childish way of shortening time, so much in esteem among women, far from being a relaxation, is a serious employment, which injures their health.

They are seen in the finest season of the year; and even in the country, careless of its charms, eagerly employed in shuffling and re-shuffling the cards even till night. This inclination rivets them eternally to a seat, and exposes them to every disease which is the consequence of the want of exercise.

In order to authorise this fashionable idleness, they allege the weakness of their

constitution; but it is precisely this idleness which weakens the constitution, and destroys, by degrees, the spring and action of the organs. Women are not made to undergo the same fatigues as we are; but Nature, in giving them beauty, united to it a degree of strength which forms a part of it; and has proportioned their vigour to what she has exacted of them. The vivacity with which they will devote themselves whole days to violent exercises, as dancing, does not pronounce them destined to live in an easy chair.

It is hard enough to reconcile the wonderful activity of women, when the voice of Pleasure or of the Passions commands them, with the indolent life to which many among them condemn themselves. They might be said to be sometimes all on fire, at others to be but half alive. These are two extremes which are common to the sex, and which often follow each other very close in the same person.

In some, this indolence is a dangerous calm which succeeds the storm of the passions; in others, it is a want of courage that hinders them from acting and thinking: in both cases it is the most unhappy distemper which can attack them. It is a rust which secretly gnaws the vitals, and deprives the mind of its judgment.

This languishment, so common in capitals, is always the bad consequence of want of employment; it is a rooted drowsiness, from which they cannot be roused but by violent shaking.

The fair sex, attacked by this disorder, in vain make short jaunts in a coach, or take a few turns on the sands; but something more is necessary, and Doctor Tronchin was well persuaded of it when he prescribed for the most delicate women quick walks and violent exercises. This was the only way of extricating them from the melancholy state into which they had been thrown by repose and abundance.

Let women submit themselves to Nature, and action, if they wish to live: I love rather active frolics than a sluggishness which is a kind of death. That young hair-brain who causes every where a hurly-burly, and makes herself be carried to twenty places in a night, may come to herself, and moderate that active petulance; but it is seldom that she, whom an effeminate idleness has brought to a total depression, takes upon herself to avert and throw off the yoke of her indolence.

A river which has overflowed its banks *will* return to its channel; a muddy bog will always remain such.

To fly from the black vapours which idleness causes, are there, then, no other means than plunging into folly? Yes, without doubt; it is a wise medium, but which is seldom sought for: we may divide our beauties into idlers and madcaps, nearly the same as they divide them into fair and brunettes.

They who preserve themselves from pining, too frequently give themselves up to a dissipation which makes them parade to excess, and long for every thing they see. Whims succeed each other rapidly, and keep them in continual motion: it is a new trinket they are mad after; sometimes it is a dog or a parrot they are charmed with; a set of china equally engrosses their regards. Their minds, always filled with new trifles, have not a moment's relaxation; and, in an habitual leisure, they complain of not being able to enjoy a single instant.

“ It is thus,” as an antient writer said, “ that life is passed away without doing any thing at all, or in doing every other thing but what should be done.” I wish the ladies I am treating of would take a whim of putting down on paper an exact account of every thing they have done through the day, to be laid on their toilette every night, they would see that they are in the predicament I speak of—that they either do nothing, or attend only to trifles.

In a word, it is necessary there should be a real daily employment; the body should have its task as well as the mind. Knitting is not a greater labour than flirting a fan: it is necessary to have some employment that requires attention; such as the needle, drawing, &c.

Women have learned all these things in their earliest youth: it was not, doubtless, that they should forget them in more advanced life. In whatever station they may be, well-ordered employment does them honour. It is the way not to abandon themselves to that languor, or to the first passion which chance may excite.

When we read in antient writers what they inform us was the custom of living among the women of their time, they were very far from considering the works of the women as trifling.

Homer speaks to us of princesses who took upon them the economy of their households and the care of their servants, and

also made the clothes of their husbands and family.

He describes Andromache to us as employing herself in works of embroidery: Helen made rich carpets, which she also embroidered. The celebrated Penelope and her web are well known.

Terence, Virgil, and all the authors, as well sacred as profane, agree as to the active and laborious lives of women; and even at Rome, in its most corrupted times, Augustus, from the account of Suetonius, wore no other clothes than those made by his wife or his sister.

It was even a custom in the last century for women to employ themselves in useful works. The half of our antient nobility were not contented with employing only some part of the day in ingenuity: there may be seen in France many mansions in which the whole furniture has been worked by the lady of the house.

There are always sufficient examples to quote for the encouraging women to activity.

The Germans, that wise nation, who have least degenerated from the antient manners, have preserved in their women that love for work that they themselves possess. In all the German courts, the princesses work assiduously among their ladies, and do not blush at being employed about domestic concerns.... but they would blush to be found idlers. As they do not think women have the shameful privilege of doing nothing, they think that the love of employment is a virtue which sets off the others, and which does honour to their sex, even upon a throne.

CHAP. IV.

OF PLEASURES.

We hear of women incessantly talking of pleasures; and they speak of them with an enthusiasm that seduces themselves. Notwithstanding, these pleasures, so hunted after, and of which they figure to themselves so sweet a picture, are frequently the most contrary to what they had imagined: they return very serious from an assembly where they reckoned on much amusement; and pleasure is dismissed till another fête, where they perhaps, will not find more.

Not to fatigue themselves in vain in the pursuit of pleasure, if it would be proper for women to form to themselves a just idea of it, let them keep upon their guard against the false images that too lively an imagination may picture.....it is that which leads

them incessantly from the true, and promises them transports and delight that are not in nature.

These are pleasing dreams which vanish at the moment of waking, and leave nothing but the regret of having been deceived.

What the women seek for at a distance, is much nearer them than they think. Pleasures are always at hand; but it is necessary to be happily disposed to catch them. They are the children of Need: if her voice does not call them, it is needless to pursue.

When a walk succeeds a sedentary employment, it is a sensible pleasure. Rest becomes one, in its turn, if it has been preceded by a little fatigue. Every thing that we do may be turned into a kind of pleasure, if done properly.

It is from this well-understood succession that life draws its charms: it has none for those who know not how to intermix employment and relaxation.

This is exactly the defect of the greater part of our belles. Their taste is decidedly

for pleasure; and the too great eagerness that they have for it, causes it to fly far from them: they will not understand that pleasure is purchased, and that labour is its price: to reject the latter is to be willing to lose the former.

Know, then, that this pleasure, which they so idolize, will be quitted in order to be resumed: it is a momentary state in its nature; an agreeable emotion of the soul, which awakens and refreshes it, if it is but seldom; but would harass it, if continued.

Women have sought in vain to perpetuate pleasure by labouring to vary and refine it. Their inventive genius has multiplied objects of amusement, and every day created new ones without gaining anything. All these fantastical pleasures, which are founded in vanity, have but a weak hold upon the mind. They have proved more and more the impossibility of fixing pleasure for life, as some women would wish to have it. Moreover, is it the part of a

reasonable creature to make pleasure her principal business here?

A woman led away by this taste for amusement, is commonly neither a mother, wife, friend, nor even a citizen; a party of pleasure, a ball, makes her forget all: still happy if dissipation does not lead her to forget *even herself*.

In truth, virtue is not always the last sacrifice she makes to her inclinations. When frequent enjoyment has blunted the edge of ordinary pleasures, they seek to provoke the listless soul by something more poignant: the vivacity that challenges the tender passions to pleasure, is a powerful allurement for the destruction of women. Their hearts find new resources in a gallantry for which they have but too great an inclination:—dangerous charm, which habituates the soul to lively agitations, and gives it a disgust for every thing that is of a more temperate nature!

When the mind opens itself to the passions, it exposes itself to the disrelish of

life. Thenceforward the tranquil and innocent pleasures, which Nature at all times holds out, are lost; the heart has only a certain measure of sentiment, which it is necessary to know well how to manage: that of women is naturally more lively than ours; but they exhaust this tenderness so much upon one object, that there remains none for any other.

Love takes possession of their whole soul, shuts the avenues against every other inclination, and afterwards leaves it in a profound lethargy. These are short fits, which are soon followed by an insupportable chill.

The pleasures of which we are capable are proportioned to the extent and capacity of the heart. It is not formed for those delights which transport it out of itself. These are a species of convulsion which cannot last; but there are a number of pleasures, which, by making a weaker impression, are but the more estimable. These pleasures renew themselves every day, un-

der various forms, and unite themselves instead of excluding each other. They produce in the soul a genial warmth that cherishes the health, and keeps it in a happy medium.

These are the pleasures, the pursuit of which do not expose women to any danger and which they may enjoy without pain or remorse.

I pity those who are not sensible of their being within their reach, and who consider that as a melancholy life which is exempted from the mad agitation of the passions.

A similar insensibility deprives them of pleasures much preferable to those which can arise from a dangerous attachment. An ingenious and wise woman knows how to select amusements, where her mind is benefited without her heart losing any thing.

A person of this character knows how to reap advantage from every changing scene which society presents. What a tribute for amusement does Nature and the Arts afford her!

Every thing speaks to, and entertains her who knows how to think. It is nothing but a total stupidity that can make the mind glance upon so many objects without being the least affected by them; but where the generality of women find only an insipid amusement for the eyes, they who possess a greater capacity always find a fresh recreation for their minds.

The ennui which some women complain of, is not, as they imagine, a mark of their superiority. This malady, the greatest that can afflict the soul, is, on the contrary, a certain mark of its bad constitution. It is a cowardice and littleness of soul to be languid in the midst of a crowd of objects which can furnish continual exercise; and the way in which some people dissipate their weariness, proclaims still more this littleness. But there is more than one pretty woman that submits to figure away in the world merely as a handsome automaton.

I have seen one of these beauties ready to die of a languor, the cause of which she

was ignorant of: suddenly transported with joy on the appearance of a Siberian dog which was made her a present of, she placed her affections so strongly on this animal, that she went no more abroad, and condemned herself to become its gaoler.

Pleasures are felt, like thoughts, by the greater or less elevation of soul we possess. A woman endued with talents, instead of conversing with a dog or a bird would draw from her harpsichord bursts of harmony which would gratify, and unite to it those sweet accords of her voice which taste and sentiment would regulate; she will know how from that to pass to diverting and instructive readings; and despicable romances, whose only merit consists in encouraging the depravity of the reader, would not be her favourite books. She will even find among her own sex more estimable writers.

A lady might form a library of the books written by women only. Le Ville-dieu, Deshoulières, Sévigné, and a number of

others; dispute the palm of genius with our greatest men. The illustrious Fauveauelle has written some pieces conjunctively with Madame de Seal. The race of these superior women is not extinct; we have yet Thalias for comedy, Chio's for history; and a flourishing academy at this day boasts of possessing, as a member, the eminent imitress of Milton.

It is in familiarizing herself with such models that a sensible woman may unbend herself usefully, and be perfect in the happy gift of explaining herself with elegance and ease: the pleasures a reasonable person ought to unite in refining her reason, by mildly enlivening her wit.

The theatre would be an amusement they might enjoy with advantage, if it was kept within proper bounds. There are a great number of pieces fit to exalt the ideas and form the taste; but a delicate woman should avoid running to low plays, where licentious couplets provoke bursts of laughter, at the expense of her sex, from a low pit.

Such plays are more calculated to spoil the imagination of women than to embellish it; and it is a rich source for pleasure which it behoves them not to alter.

There is no time in which a flowery imagination cannot furnish pure and delicate pleasures: it is that which gives to the meadows, the woods, the fountains, the zephyrs, and the songs of the nightingale, that gratifying charm which we find in them; it also enriches the magnificent decorations of the universe, and sheds over its different objects smiling colours, which give them additional lustre.

Life, when rationally employed, is strewed with pleasures of every kind, which gratify by turns the senses and the mind; but this latter never recreates itself more agreeably than in the conversation of cultivated persons, capable of instructing and amusing: two things which generally go hand in hand.

It cannot be too much recommended to women to prefer the conversation of such

persons to the babbling of these empty cox-combs: there is every thing to gain on one side, and every thing to be lost on the other.

The conversation which women hold with the first, elevates their soul, and causes new thoughts to spring up, abstracts them from the passions, and draws advantage even from leisure; whilst the jargon of the others depresses the minds of women, abases them, and entirely corrupts their hearts.

If any thing can add to the pleasure derived from a select society, it is the charms of friendship. I know not upon what principle they have founded the injustice, which they have done women by excluding them from it: *they* are born with more sensibility than men, and are capable of becoming friends, when gallantry has not enervated their hearts. I shall not enlarge upon the advantages of friendship, which may be called a double life, since each lives in her friend. The Marchioness de Lambert has drawn a delicate picture of it,

which sufficiently proves that her heart was formed to enjoy its sweets. One wishes, in reading it, to find such a friend; and feel that there is nothing to be compared to that blessing.

Those pleasures which touch the heart without disturbing it, are not made for the generality of the fair sex, whom folly leads on from caprice to caprice. These women require a continual agitation; one moment of reflection brings them to themselves, and deranges the whole of their mad system.

But it is in vain for them to have recourse, to an hyperbole to describe their delicious amusements: people are not the dupes of their inconsiderate laughter, and they do not judge them the happier on that account —happiness is an enemy to that confusion of pleasures to which they resign themselves. The whirlpool of the grand-monde is not its element; it seeks the shade, and the company of some persons formed to know it; it is in the midst of a small number of wise friends that it likes to enjoy itself: confined

to this circle, it knows how to do without a great number of witnesses and the mad glare of a multitude.

I shall here give you Pliny's receipt for making friendship.

In Pliny's Natural History, we find this curious receipt for making a Roman friendship, the principal ingredients of which were—union of hearts (a flower that grew in several parts of the empire), sincerity, frankness, disinterestedness, pity, and tenderness; of each an equal quantity: these were all made up together with two rich oils, which they called perpetual kind wishes and serenity of temper; and the whole was strongly perfumed with the desire of pleasing, which gave it a most grateful smell, and was a sure restorative against vapours of all sorts. The cordial thus prepared was of so durable a nature, that no length of time could waste it; but what is more remarkable (says our author), it increased in its weight and value the longer it was kept.

CHAP. V.

OF THE LUXURY OF WOMEN.

Luxury has so much relation to women, and possesses such great attractions for them, that a work that is consecrated to them, ought not to pass over such an important subject. It is not intended here to treat upon it politically, but in the relation it has with the sex, who are its declared protectors.

I am not desirous of proposing here the ancient times as models. Luxury is as ancient as the world. There have always been women capable of abusing that which is at their disposal, by making it subservient to their vanity. In the early ages they abused less, because they possessed less. Luxury was then proportioned to the rudeness of

the times, and the small number of discoveries.

The female savages of Canada pride themselves as much in their shells and feathers as our ladies in their jewels.

Luxury has increased gradually with riches. It reigned very antiently through all the East; it was carried to great lengths by the Athenian women; and was pursued to the highest excess in the unhappy time in which one city alone absorbed the treasures of the whole world.

But, in all ages, there have been but few persons who have regulated their desires by their wants.

Our times, which may be compared to the most ostentatious of the Roman empire, offer still many examples of a wise moderation. In the midst of this immense luxury, which swallows up the greatest fortunes, we find distinguished women enemies to all ostentation. Quiet spectatresses of the follies of their fellow-citizens they know how to reconcile what is due to their rank with

decency, with that sweet simplicity inseparable from true grandeur.

Public good and private interest are equally interested in prohibiting Luxury, the corrupter of all states.

The Roman ladies sacrificed, with pleasure, their jewels and trinkets to this love for the public good. Such a sacrifice is not expected from the English ladies; but it is to be wished they would moderate a little the inclination they have for every thing that dazzles.

The search after agreeable things can only be blamed by persons enemies of the human race and themselves. They cannot, without a sort of barbarity, reject with disdain all those amiable and useful arts which increase the pleasures of society. It is to confess that they are not born to relish its sweets, and to shew themselves only worthy of living among bears; to declaim against decency, complaisance, and taste, for which we are indebted to politeness and the arts. But are there not means of fixing just

bounds to the search after conveniencies and pleasures? Do our pretty voluptuaries think that this refinement, which is every day increasing, is a benefit? Is that excess of delicacy proper to increase our pleasure or their own?

It is easy to see that this false delicacy only leads women on from error to error. They become enamoured of trifles, with which they are disgusted within the day, and which they exchange for others of as trifling a value. They wish, incessantly, to be retouching the work of Nature; they disfigure it, and render it hardly to be known under a load of frivolous ornaments.

Art, used every where, has so dazzled the imagination, that they are no longer sensible of the beauties of Simplicity.

Objects have been valued not according to their excellence, but as they were scarce a sure method of being led away by a false judgement.

When the goodness or utility of things no longer regulate the taste, these tastes

vary according to caprice and opinion: thus we have seen them change every moment. They thought to enrich themselves, and they have in fact impoverished themselves. Our desires are extinguished in consequence of being satisfied; and that which, by being enjoyed with moderation produces a more poignant variety, loses all its charms when an ill-managed sumptuosity is diffused without measure.

I appeal to a great many of our amiable personages, who, by having too much gratified their sensations, are soon reduced to the state of having no relish for any thing. They know no longer the voice of Want, which, by being always prevented, gives not to pleasure that vivacity which it only enjoys from it. Effeminacy and ease having united splendor to conveniency, have been before-hand with it, and changed the natural order of things.

In spite of the fatal effects of luxury, it is always the idol of women. There is

even a contention among them who shall procure themselves these glittering fooleries, even at the expence of the feelings of honour. A woman encourages little mean passions; and seeks to satisfy them by means proportioned to what actuated them; and finds now nothing unworthy of her.

But let us turn our attention from this part of the sex, who dishonour it. It is to be supposed that such women are associated with the sharers of our sex; far from all good company. It is only with women who cherish honour and virtue that we can converse with any advantage.

I maintain, that, to this estimable part of the sex, luxury wears the semblance of the harshest disease; inasmuch as it favours disorders and gallantry, it opposes itself to the true end of woman. It breaks through establishments, however strong they may be, and estranges the men from every serious engagement with them.

Formerly a man took a wife without fortune, and sometimes they even portion-

ed them; in the present day they receive with a young and amiable wife very large sums: and, nevertheless, the men marry with regret, often very late, and a great many never at all.

Why cannot the two things that men love the best, the graces and gold, incline them to the sweetest of all contracts? We may affirm, that the luxury of women, alone, makes the men fearful of uniting themselves with them. They fear, with justice, an ostentation which becomes a kind of necessity; and, by always urging them to excesses beyond the fortune they bring a husband, threatens to absorb that of the husband.

Marriage is only decried in ages of luxury. The greater number of men are afraid of its expences, which caprice and pride have rendered burdensome. There are no longer but two sorts of persons who submit to it: persons reduced to a misery to which nothing can add, or those who find an indemnification in an immense portion,

of which a great part is spent on that very day in superfluities.

Beauty and virtue are hardly reckoned upon; and, as large fortunes are scarce, especially among persons of distinguished rank, their small heiresses find themselves condemned to pass their lives in melancholy celibacy, or to demean themselves shamefully.

The Political Will, attributed to M. Colbert, speaks of a girl of quality, who, compelled by her parents to marry a man of mean birth, died of chagrin within a year. These alliances are not uncommon in the present day, and have not such fatal consequences. A brilliant equipage makes up for the want of quality in the husband. A plume of feathers, a knot of diamonds, steals a fair one by surprize, and makes her pass joyfully from the midst of an illustrious family into one of obscure parentage, and, sometimes, tarnished.

All that the generality of women expect now of a husband, is, that his fortune should

be able to supply the insatiable appetites of luxury. Women, consequently, judge of men by the exterior figure they cut. An inch of embroidery more, makes them give the preference to a man; and we see them every day receive with complaisance Crispins in lace. That should not astonish us: the imaginations of women being continually fed with details of jewels, clothes, &c., they fill their heads in such a manner with shadows, that they pay no attention to objects which better deserve it.

Their conversation contributes much to increase this weakness. There are very few, who, among themselves, do not treat upon some kind of dress.

If speaking of a new-married woman, they ask a thousand questions concerning her clothes and laces; whether she has diamonds, a handsome carriage, &c.; and only inquire slightly about the character of the husband.

The minds of women glide lightly over essential qualities, and only attach them-

selves to the drapery. Is it surprizing that they should be so frequently the dupes of a turn of mind which prevents their seeing other than the superficiality of things? Besides, what real distinction can they hope for from all this tinsel, when we see the laymen of the present day exhaust in their apparel, their furniture, and their equipages, every thing which riches and taste can bring together to dazzle the eyes? Can we account for the wonderful pride of such people?

We have seen the wife of a stock-jobber, in a palace in the country, distributing, by way of lottery, after a sumptuous repast, valuable trinkets to a numerous assembly. The guineas of great families which are decayed, fill, in the present day, the anti-chambers of the lowest men; and we see, confounded together under the same garb of magnificence, women of no condition with those of the highest rank.

Is it proper, then, for these to ruin their families with difficulty to attain to such despicable models?

All the world agree that there is nothing more imposing than this prostituted eclat, yet nobody leaves it off. When once luxury has reduced all ranks to a level; "When," as the Friend of Men says, "the prop of rank is laid low, pomp signifies no longer any thing." This is our case; and our society will soon be only a masquerade, where each one wears not the dress most suitable to his character, but the most conformable to his fancy, and that under which he expects to be least known.

It appears that such a reverse ought to produce a greater effect than the sumptuary laws.

If any thing could cry down a vain pride, it should be to see men of the vilest stamp clothed with it; but they are, in this respect, always children; and women had rather partake of these fancied advantages with persons the most disreputable, than see themselves deprived of them.

CHAP. VI.

OF THE DRESS OF WOMEN.

We have here before us an article of luxury which affects women the closest, and that, consequently, in which it is most difficult to reform them. We even run a risk of displeasing them, if we attack, in a direct manner, this interesting part of their employment. We have no design of undertaking it. The end which they propose to themselves in raising, with art, the elegant edifice of their attire, is too much to the advantage of men, for them to have any desire of overturning it.

The aim of women, when they deck themselves with so much care, is, most assuredly to please; and even to please us, according to our ideas. Behold us, thereby, fixed

upon as the natural judges of their charms. We may then give them some advice, and pronounce upon the form in which we wish they would regulate it.

Women have judged that Art might assist Nature, and that their allurements could borrow from it new charms. They are not deceived. Dress, employed with management, puts beauty in its meridian; but, it appears to me, they have sometimes abused its assistance.

Inasmuch as a few ornaments relieve the lustre of beauty, they have concluded, that, by multiplying these ornaments, they cannot but add to their graces. They have, in consequence, heaped upon themselves all kinds, independent of the jewels, gildings, ribands, lace, and filigree, that have been lavished upon all their habiliments. Flowers, feathers, all the productions of Nature, have been either placed or imitated upon different parts of their dress; stuffs of all colours have been employed, with a profusion which has been carried to excess;

and there is required, at this time, as much stuff to dress two women as would suffice for tapestry for a drawing-room. What has been the consequence of all these ornaments thus heaped together? The charms of the person have found themselves annihilated in this astonishing train; the number of gewgaws has caused them to lose sight of the regularity of features; the height has been diminished by the vast circumference of draperies, in such a manner, that the woman, we may say, has disappeared, and left nothing to be seen but the variegated frippery of her dress.

This, assuredly, was not the intention of women. There is some appearance that the first ornaments they invented were more fit to answer their views; but the desire they have had to outvie one another made them overstrain things from envy, and has distanced them more and more in proportion, without which there is no real charms.

Ornaments ought only to assist the graces, not stifle them. It is not the mass, but the

well-selected choice of ornaments which gives addition to beauty. Give gauze, flowers, and ribands, to young girls, and they will be more decked than the greater part of our ladies, with all the diamonds with which they load themselves, and adorn the richest stuffs. All this is the vanity of rank, and not of person. If women understood well *their* interests and *our's*, they would place no account on a misplaced richness, which defeats the effect of their charms, and the pleasure we have in finding them handsome.

What causes so high a value to be set upon these trifles, in the opinion of women, is the violent desire they have of attracting the eyes of the multitude. When once this fanaticism has entered the head, it excludes every other thought: they then love shew and pomp, and only live to be looked at.

Do you think it is to take exercise that our pretty women go in crowds to the public rides and walks? Assuredly not. Lock-

ed one in another in a rank of carriages, they have no other movement but that of smiling in return to bows. It is only, perhaps, to be noticed, and become to our eyes as an agreeable flower-garden enamelled with the brightest colours. If you doubt it, see the retreat *they* condemn themselves to, whose head-dresses have not been put in a state to appear in: the serenest sky cannot draw them to an auction.

It may be said, that the pleasure which holds the pre-eminence among women is that of shewing themselves, and being thought handsome. It is this which leads them from one circle to another; and, as they fear one uniform and constant appearance in the same ornaments would soon cease to have the effect they desire, they have recourse, from time to time, to changes, which draw upon them fresh attention,

Behold the principle of those fashions to which we suffer ourselves to be drawn.

It is a stratagem of the sex to renew the same person, and reproduce it, with advantage, under various forms

It is to equal our instability that the minds of women, always employed with the means of pleasing, invent every day new attire.

The picture of ornaments changes with the wind, and the courier of fashions often comes too late. Among so many different caprices, it is difficult for women always happily to agree. Sometimes they offer us grotesque kinds, better calculated to disfigure than to ornament.

It is, for example, with regret we see the gracefulness of their persons buried in an enormous hoop, which bears no proportion to their height. They have been told, a thousand times, that white takes away all movement from their faces, and that red, alone, causes that clearness of complexion, which so much charms us, to disappear. The women obstinately persist in not believing us. Like to that ignorant possessor of an excellent statue, who caused it to be gilt,

they paint their faces red, like the antient priestesses of Bacchus—and imagine, that, in thus lighting up their faces, their eyes become more sparkling.

This custom, worthy of the most savage nations, transforms the loveliest faces into painted pagodas.

I pray the ladies to forgive me this censure against the abuse of the toilette. But can we see, without chagrin, that the pains they take renders them less handsome? We cannot help urging them to their real advantage.

In all times, men, more zealous than themselves for the preservation of their beauty, have opposed those ridiculous fashions which have robbed them of it. In spite of their complaints, the head-dress, which has so great an influence on the features, has undergone the most wonderful revolutions: we have seen the face lower than it by two feet; called then, very impropriety, commode. The head-dress afterwards received that in breadth which it had

before in height; and absorbed, as we may say, the face. The arms, surmounted by ridiculous epaulettes, found themselves lost in enormous sleeves of fur. Our mothers made themselves vulgar farthingales of checkered stuffs, and an infinite number of furbelows; and in the present day, their daughters, not to degenerate, are not contented with disguising their stature by a mock girdle, giving them the appearance of being with child, which was worn by almost every boarding-school Miss turned of thirteen. They will also mask the complexion and graces of the face with a disgraceful plaster.

This latter article is too important to smile at. We have hardly been able, without murmuring, to see the women load themselves with an uncouth assortment of finery; as in moderate ruffs, scarfs, &c.

That can only be charged as a slight reproof of frivolity, which does not make them lose their credit with us; but that which directly attacks their persons, as point, and

the double bed of rouge—it is, if we dare tell them so, a complete proof of bad taste and a kind of outrage upon themselves that we cannot forgive.

Let women have more confidence in their charms, and less in all the little cummings of art. All the graces given at the glass, can never equal those graces which Nature has lavished upon them with a liberal hand: all these ornaments, of which they are so choice, do not assist their attractions, but often hurt them. Diamonds, gildings, and stuffs, add nothing to beauty; they only share its attentions, and render them plainer who want attractions.

Cannot women, then, perceive that nature has made all the charms of their dress, and left hardly any addition to make upon this article? If they would rely upon her for the means of pleasing, it is the surest way of succeeding. A woman is never so handsome as when she is insensible of it. What does she gain by being occupied incessantly about her charms?

Beauty has no need of cultivation, like the mind and the heart, which women are in the habit of neglecting too much.

They should, then, devote their attentions to those objects, which unhappily for some among them, is the weak side: they would not be in vain; and we can assure them of success.

It is, moreover, the most solid distinction and the only one that persons of high rank can place between them and persons of low condition. Magnificence confounds, in the present age, both under the same exterior; but manners, language, and sentiments, will always establish real distinctions, which cannot disappear.

CHAP. VII.

OF THE CHARACTER AND DISPOSITION OF
WOMEN.

"Caprice in women," said La Bruyere, "is nearly a counterpoise to beauty." In truth, nothing sooner effaces the impression that a handsome face makes than a capricious and humoursome temper. We are but too much indebted to women on this account; and it is astonishing, that they who are the most greedy after conquests, are generally the least disposed to preserve them.

All men agree, that a fine woman is the most charming sight that Nature can offer them. They admire her with a common accord; but she seldom suffers herself to be loved long; whilst a woman of a moderate share of beauty, or even without beauty,

kindles sometimes the strongest and most lasting love. It is a reproach which the women daily make us. They think of crying down our taste, and pass, without intending it, a great eulogium upon our discernment. It is an exquisite lesson, withstanding a charm so powerful as that of beauty, to prefer to it less brilliant but more solid advantages.

A lovely person, always flattered from the cradle, and who has only been discoursed with upon her complexion and her graces, remains generally what Nature formed her — a pretty object to look at. Incessantly employed upon herself, we frequently see her fall into an affectation which discourages.

They tie over and over again a bracelet in order to display a handsome arm; they re-adjust, at another time, a necklace or a nosegay to cause the whiteness of their neck to be remarked; they laugh to shew fine teeth; they stumble, replace a patch, and change their attitudes every moment, to

strike the men with some new subject of admiration; and all these grimaces have generally a very different effect upon them.

It is thus that some women find means of changing Nature by endeavouring too anxiously to improve it: they model their features, their voices, and even their language, affecting a borrowed wit which be-nights theirs. The wit they would have, spoils that which they have. And from this vain labour proceeds a borrowed air, which spoils their natural beauty.

A professed beauty is always curbed from a foolish thing, which makes her pass for equal with a wit upon record.

They, on the contrary, whom Nature appears to have rather neglected, seek to repair its defects by acquiring amiable qualities: their minds not being spoiled by flattery, acquire truth; their thoughts, being less filled up with self, expand themselves advantageously: thereby greater resources for intercourse, and consequently fewer whims.

As they have not so many pretensions, they have not so lofty an air, and form an obliging disposition, which renders those charms they do possess so much the more alluring, as they appear to reckon less upon them.

These are their advantages, which compensate for those of person, and are even preferred before them. There are in the character and disposition powerful charms which supply the want of beauty, and to which this latter adds nothing.

But these charms are scarcely more common than beauty itself. It is not because, like it, it has been distributed without reserve. Nature has implanted in the minds of women every thing that is necessary to render their society delicious: they have only to follow the impulse of these dispositions to be always amiable and always beloved.

It is melancholy that many among them change, as we may say, this natural

happy ground, by plucking up the roses to plant brambles in their room.

In truth, how many women, instead of labouring on the side that Nature points out to them, seem desirous of defeating her views! The one substituting for mildness, which is their appendix, an imperious and haughty humour, which erects itself upon the slightest contradiction, and lays down its sallies for laws.

Others, confounding effrontery with an air of grandeur, despise modesty like a virtuous citizen, and follow the loosest ways with a decided air, which appears in their looks and tosses of the head. Some others, instead of that calm serenity so suitable to their sex, are wrapped up in thick clouds, and hardly get out of bed: they repine so much, that every thing indisposes and overcomes them; they wish they were dead, and destined to spread joy among us; they give way to sorrow and languor.

There is another kind of caprice very different from this last; it is that of those

thundering ladies, who, trampling under foot the decorum of their sex, set up all their regularities of eclat. They run every where, make twenty engagements, pay as many visits in the same day, and think themselves out of the world if they are not at a ball, a play, or a large assembly. Their house, on certain days, becomes a kind of public house, where all the idlers of our sex go in crowds, worthy of figuring around them. This kind, known under the name of *petites maitresses*, seem to have taken upon themselves the task of decrying their sex. The theatrical ladies are the respectable models after whom they take pattern: they have borrowed from them indecency in their airs, deportment, and dress, and some of them have even adopt their manners.

All these irregularities, and many others which I have ascribed to the sex, are not natural to them, and are as yet unknown in places where luxury and bad examples have not penetrated.

Caprice is daughter to Leisure and Ef-feminacy. Women who lead an idle and soft life are generally a prey to some kind of follies, or take them in turn. There are some of this description: these are those unequal women, whose character is that of having none; they are seen to fall from an indiscreet gaiety to a mournful silence; from the coldest indolence they spring to a petulant vivacity—that which yesterday formed their delight, is to-day insupportable to them. Such women fly from one extreme to another, and shew, in turns, all the irregularities of human nature.

We will not increase farther an enumeration which might cause me to be suspected of writing a satire upon the sex—this, most assuredly, is not my intention. This bewitching sex have but too unhappily the power of making themselves be forgiven, and even to make us approve their follies. It is true, if these errors are carried to a cer-tain pitch, they strike a blow at the charms of society;—we might say, that beauty loses,

then, her rights. A sensible man will always fly from the deceitful bait which conceals a bad character: he knows that the most cruel of all slaveries is that of loving what we cannot esteem.

But when the graces are found united to an excellence of character, and animated with a mild cheerfulness, it is then that the empire of beauty is solidly established. A woman in whom these advantages are united is the ornament of society, and constitutes its greatest happiness; for, if beauty adds to the merit of a character, this lends, in its turn, new charms to the features: the dispositions of the soul shew themselves in the face and embellish even beauty itself.

I repeat it, *mildness* and *cheerfulness*—these are the bases of an amiable character. It is impossible but a woman, if endued with these two qualities, must please. That mildness which conciliates all hearts, is a sort of amiable instinct given by Nature, which a good education improves. It is by insinuating ways that women reign; and

they have so much more power as they arrogate less to themselves.

Politeness is only this same mildness reduced to art; it is the emblem of good nature, and holds its place: but this exterior, if it is not grounded upon goodness of heart, soon discovers itself. It is, then, a kind of hypocrisy of which one is not long the dupe.

It is the same with cheerfulness. It is a happy disposition of mind, which must not be confounded with that false merriment by which some women affect to make themselves more agreeable. It is very far distant from that riotous joy to which our female rakes of quality abandon themselves without reserve, and which they wish to trace over again incessantly. A mind which requires these mad pleasures to prevent its sinking, is not in a good state: we may compare it to those constitutions which are only upheld by means of strong liquors. These intermitting pleasures partake of folly and caprice, and are, the greater part of

the time, succeeded by a sombre and fractious humour.

Good humour is always much below this excess; but it always maintains an equilibrium. It is the mark of a regulated mind and a tranquil heart. That gracious and smiling air is seldom ever found where vice and violence reign. The passions which trouble the heart are only immoderate expressions like them.

This equality appears too much of sameness to women who like bustling. They have decried it as the limits of a moderate spirit. Accustomed to a petulant vivacity caused by the passions, they have looked upon a modest woman as a cold personage, incapable of animating society; which comprises, in truth, a woman who does not rend her friends asunder, and will not risk herself, unnecessarily, with nothing on but a slight gauze to preserve her from indecency: such a woman, borrowing nothing from malignancy or voluptuousness, is an innocent creature, who can furnish nothing in-

teresting in a society where every thing is sacrificed to the mad love of pleasure.

They would not judge so, if they only observed how much wit is necessary to maintain a conversation in an agreeable strain, without the assistance of immodest or back-biting discourse. They give but too much way, in the present day, to a licence that destroys that benevolence or respect which we mutually owe to each other. The greater part of the *bon mots* which provoke laughter do not deserve the applauses with which they are honoured, only through the malignancy of their hearers.

The woman of merit would blush to be applauded at this price. She knows not how to sacrifice modesty or friendship to the ridiculous vanity of spouting an epigram. She who has recourse to these shameful resources, feels her weakness. It is easy to shine when persons neither respect the reputation or manners of themselves or others.

As this publication is intended to improve the female character, I shall give you some remarks upon it that appeared under the name of **PARTICEPS**, as I think they do the greatest honour to his character as a Christian, and a man who has the true interests of society at heart.

“Conversation does much; reading more. I have lately been called on to consider well, and to adopt, the following remarks on the fairest of God’s creation, last and best, so long as they know their own; and, as a father, feeling their importance, it is my wish to give them permanency.

“It is the desire of women to be agreeable, and they will model themselves according to what they think will please. If, therefore, those who take the lead and set the fashion in society were wise and virtuous, I have no doubt but women would set the brightest patterns of every thing that is excellent.

“There is no deficiency in the female mind either as to talents or dispositions; nor

can we say, with certainty, that there is any subject of intellectual or moral discussion in which women have not excelled. If the delicacy of their constitution, or other physical causes, allow the female sex a smaller share of some mental powers, they possess others in a superior degree, which are no less respectable in their own nature, and of as great importance to society.

“ Women are more sensible than men to all moral distinctions. They do not, indeed, class the virtues in the same order; but they give the highest importance to the comprehensive virtue of temperance, because their own perilous situation in society makes it their chief protector; nor do they, by any means, over-rate its worth. I am convinced that cultivated society depends more for its happiness on the quick apprehension and strong abhorrence in women of every trespass upon female modesty, than on all the boasted manly virtues. Dissoluteness, or even indelicacy, in the sentiments which connect us with the sex,

is the chief source of all the evils in society; whereas a high degree of female virtue produces a general reverence for the sex; and we thus have happiness at home, and peace and security abroad.

“ The religious sentiments by which mortals are ever best assisted in the discharge of their moral duties, and still more the sentiments, which, as purely religious, can have no reference to any thing here, are precisely those which most easily operate in the mind of women. Affection, admiration filial reverence, are, if I mistake not exceedingly, those in which the women far surpass men; and it is on this account that we generally find them so much disposed to devotion, which is an indulgence of those affections without limit to the imagination. And this is done without any fear of exceeding; because infinite wisdom and goodness will always justify the sentiments and free the expression of it from the charge of hyperbole or extravagance. I am convinced, therefore that the female mind is well

adapted for cultivation by means of religion, and that their native softness and kindness of heart will always be sufficient for procuring it a favourable reception from them.

“ It is not merely the circumstance of woman being considered as the moral companion of man that gives the sex its empire among us. There is something of this to be observed in all nations. There must be a moral connexion, in order that the human species may be a race of rational creatures, improvable not only by the increasing experience of the individual, but also by the heritable experience of successive generations. In various other parts of the world, we see that consideration in which the sex is held nearly follows the proportions of that aggregate of many particulars which we consider as constituting the cultivation of society. It is in Christian Europe that man has attained his highest degree of cultivation; and it is, undoubtedly, here that women have attained the highest rank.

“ But even here there is a perceptible superiority of the female character; in those countries of Europe where the purest Christianity prevails; and, I can venture to say, that in Britain, her important rights are more generally respected than any where else. No where is a man’s character so much hurt by conjugal infidelity; no where is it so difficult to rub off the stigma of bastardy, or to procure a decent reception in society after an improper connexion: and, I believe, it will readily be granted, that the share of women in successions, their authority in all matters of domestic trust, and even their opinions in what concerns life and manners, are more fully respected here than in any other country. I have long been of opinion, and every observation since its being formed confirms me in it, that to christianity alone is woman indebted for the high rank she holds in society. Look into the writings of Pagan antiquity, the works of the Greek and Latin poets, the numerous panegyrics on the sex,

whether in verse or prose, and little will be found where woman is not treated with respect. Of love there is no scant; that is to say, of fondness, of beauty, of charms, and graces; but of woman, as the equal, the moral companion of man, travelling with him the road to felicity, as his adviser, as his solace in misfortune, as a pattern from which he may sometimes copy with advantage—of all this there is hardly a trace, and woman is always mentioned as an object of passion. Chastity, modesty, sober-mindedness, are all considered in relation to this single point, or as sometimes of importance with respect to economy or domestic quiet. Recollect, in Aulus Gellius, the famous speech of Metellus Numidicus to the Roman people, when, as censor, he was recommending marriage. “ Could we exist, O Romans! without wives, we might certainly avoid the inconvenience of the matrimonial tie. But since by Nature it is so ordained, and that we can neither live

at ease with them nor without them, the public welfare, rather than personal enjoyment, must be the chief object of our attention."

" What does Ovid, the great panegyrist of the sex, say for his beloved daughter, whom in various places of his *Tristia* and other compositions, he had praised for her attractions? He is writing her epitaph; and the only thing he can say for her, as a rational creature, is, that she was *domisida*, or, not a gad-about.

" Search Apuleius, where you will find many female characters delineated; you will find that his little Photis, a cook maid and a strumpet, was nearest to his heart, after all his philosophy. Nay, in his pretty story of 'Cupid and Psyché,' which the very wise will tell you is a fine lesson of moral philosophy, and a representation of the operations of the intellectual and moral faculties of the human soul (a story which gave him the finest opportunity, and made it almost necessary for him to insert whatever can

ornament the female character); what is his Psyche but a beautiful, fond, and silly girl? And what are the whole fruits of any acquaintance with the sex?—pleasure!

“ But, why take more pains in the search? Look at their immortal goddesses, and say, is there hardly one among them whom a wise man would select for a wife or friend? I grant that a Lucretia, a Portia, an Arria, a Zenobia, are praised;—but these are individual characters, not representatives of the sex. The only Grecian ladies who made a figure by intellectual talents, were your Aspasia, Sapphos, Phryne’s, and other nymphs of that cast, who had emerged from the general insignificancy of the sex by throwing away what we are accustomed to call its greatest ornament.

“ It is Christianity, therefore, undoubtedly, which has seated woman on her true throne; making her, in every respect, the equal of man, bound to the same duties, and candidate for the same happiness. Mark

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How woman is described by a Christian-poet:

.....When I approach
Her loveliness, so absolute she seems,
And in herself complete; so well to know
Her own, that what she wills to do or say,
Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best!
Neither her outside, form'd so fair, nor aught
So much delights me as those graceful acts,
Those thousand decencies that daily flow
From all her words and actions, mix'd with love
And sweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd
Union of mind, or in us both one soul.

.....And, to consummate all,
Greatness of mind, and nobleness, their seat
Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
About her as a guard angelic plac'd.

MILTON.

“ This is really moral painting, without any abatement of female charms:—this is the natural consequence of that purity of heart, which is so much insisted on in the Christian morality. In the instructions of

Heathen philosophers, it is either not mentioned at all, or, at most, it is coldly recommended as a thing proper and worthy of a mind attentive to great things; but in Christianity, it is insisted on as an indispensable duty, and enforced by many arguments peculiar to itself alone.

“ While woman is considered as a respectable moral agent, training up along with ourselves for endless improvement, then, and only then, will she be considered by lordly man as his equal:—then, and only then, will she be allowed to have any rights, and find those rights respected. Divest woman of this prerogative, and she becomes the drudge of man’s indolence, or the pampered plaything of his idle hours; subject to his caprices, and the slave of his meaner passions. The refinement of her manners sprang from Christianity; and when Christianity is forgotten or contemned, the empire of woman is over—the diadem falls from her head!—O, my fair countrywomen! the real ornament of your sex! let me

seize this occasion to remind you, that, indeed, you have it in your power to retain and perpetuate for yourselves a most honourable station in society. You are our earliest instructors; and just as the twig is bent the tree inclines. Whilst, as mothers, you persevere to inculcate on the tender minds of your sons a veneration for the principles of religion, your pliant children, enjoying the noblest instruction joined with the affectionate caresses of their dearest friends, must receive impressions which will long retain their force; nay, will grow with their growth, and strengthen with their age; and thus protect them from the impulses of youthful passion, until ripened years have fitted their minds for listening to the ampler instruction of public teachers.

“ What a rich fund of self-estimation would our fair partners for life acquire to themselves, if, by directing the manners of infancy, they would thus insure virtue, decorum, and piety to mankind! They have it in their power. They may meet with,

some difficulties; but their cause will give courage; it will secure success, and the issue must be glorious. Then, indeed, will the women of Britain be the saviours of their country, as to its best possessions —its honour and its truest happiness. The empire of beauty is short; but the dominion of virtue, and the triumphs of religion, are great, durable, eternal. Let them but arouse themselves, and the nations of the globe will feel their happy influence. Let them assert their amiable dignity, and Vice will couch before their commanding footsteps. Let them shew their own elevated sentiments of human nature: that nature will thus be polished, refined, and sublimated; and, by acting up to this great claim upon them, they may well command and bless a surrounding world."

CHAP. VIII.

OF LOVE AND GALLANTRY.

IT is with love as it is with ambition; both lead to the greatest things, if they are rightly directed.

Love is only a vice among corrupted persons: it is a fire which emits either healthy or hurtful vapours, according to the nature of the substance it inflames. In vicious hearts it is a source of disorders; refined, in great souls, it leads them to the most generous efforts: every thing is then to be feared or hoped from love. The essential point is, then, to choose discreetly the object of one's attachment, to whom persons generally endeavour to conform themselves. This choice is of the greatest importance for women, whose hearts are so naturally

inclined to love, that they love even before they know the person they should love. There rises in the heart of a young woman, as soon as she is capable of knowing herself, an indeterminate tenderness, which only requires an object to fix it. It produces, in an early age those tender and lively friendships, and all those little effusions of the heart, which we may remark in girls who are past infancy.

When afterwards ushered into the world, they fix their curious regards on what surrounds them. The particular attentions which the men pay them, and the pleasure they have in seeing themselves sought after, develops in them sentiments, the nature of which they were ignorant of; and their hearts soon declare for him whom they think the most amiable.

It is generally the most complaisant and the most forward whom they think so. At the toilettes of women, as well as in the courts of princes, the prize is not always for the most worthy, but for the most assi-

duous and the greatest flatterer—qualities that are not always to be met with in true merit, and for want of which it is often badly received by women, and the great.

A preference so lightly granted, exposes women to cruel slights. Men, the least estimable, shew themselves the most submissive, and most attentive to please them. They insinuate themselves into their favour, then, by apparently devoting themselves to them, soon make themselves masters of their mistresses: they go farther; they become, sometimes, their tyrants, and make those groan to whose laws they had vowed an unlimited submission. **Perfidy** walks commonly in the train of **Art** and **Seduction**.

Let women cease declaiming against the deceit and treachery of men: it is their own fault if they fall into the gross nets they spread for them. It is, without doubt, false and deceitful men whom vanity fixes in the spite of women.

These men take, in order to seduce, every possible form ; but it is not hard to know them. The vile adorations and gross complaisances by which they seek to please, are sufficient to make them suspected, and lead the women to distrust their attentions.

This servile homage, which ought to make the women fear some surprize, is precisely that which attaches them, and soon makes them the victims of inconstancy and perjury—a just punishment for a caprice which fixed their regards upon qualities of such small value.

It is that which draws around them a crowd of frivolous men, always disposed to deceive them: a pleasing figure, a wanton air, a continual playfulness, takes priority of the virtues with women, who like to see their shadows in their lovers, and continue to love themselves in the persons of their adorers.

What are, in fact, the greater part of those men, who, as they say among themselves, turn the women's heads?

These proud conquerors of the sex are generally the most illiterate of ours, and objects of laughter among us.

They know how to display themselves with pride in singular clothes, false airs; but have not even always sufficient wit to vary their impertinences, which they copy from one another. Add to a foppish outside, a small talk of soft silly things, an intrigue at an assembly held at a lady's for the sake of ingenious conversation, and a downright noisy fellow: this is what is called, in the circle of women, a handsome fellow, who may well be the rival of an accomplished gentleman.

These are the assiduous courtiers of women, who have introduced an habitual gallantry, a near neighbour to affectation and insipidity. Since it has taken the place of love, the commerce between the sexes is become less serious and more free.

A babbling of flattering expressions and pretty nothings makes the rich fund. The generous love of one woman has been con-

verted into a wavering taste for the whole sex; and the language of the heart, always waggish, is become the silly interpreter of coquetry and vanity.

I know not if they gained much on the score of amusement; but I maintain that the heart lost much. All the tender declarations which they distribute so liberally among the sex have no affinity to their sentiments.

It is visible, that the incense a man heaps indiscriminately upon all women without thinking of them, and the affected primness with which she answers him, is only a game in which they mutually give each other lessons on imposition.

It is true, that, amidst this universal gallantry, he forms engagements of preference, which they call courtships: but are there many among these engagements where the heart is really a party? The rapidity with which they spring up and are extinguished, proclaim, it appears to me, sufficiently the contrary. These are weak

knots, which taste, or pleasure, unites for a time, and which caprice hardly ever fails to break.

These brittle bonds are sufficient for the truth of women more particular about words than sentiments; and these are the only ones who countenance men given up to the frolics of a heated imagination: both, always ripe for the deceitful images of voluptuousness, are little calculated to know the delights of the heart.

The heart is made for love; and there are no exquisite pleasures in which it has not a share. Also, well ordered love is one of the tenderest movements which can affect it: but when it rests only upon the lively sensations which beauty kindles, it is then only one of those foolish languishings which merely graze the heart. When senses beat so high, the heart says not a word; and whoever seeks in loving only the transports of the senses, will not preserve a long time his love.

It is not that we would preach up a Platonic love, which has been justly ridiculed. It is natural for love to wish for no reserve; but its principal substance is sentiment, and its flame hardly lasts, if it is not kept alive by the inticements of pleasures.

I must not dissemble, although I may pass for a man of antient times. All those engagements where duty and taste grow are only a kind of licentiousness, more or less refined according to the strain and disposition of the persons whom it enslaves. They do not seek to dishonour what they love; still less to corrupt the mind after having corrupted the heart. It is, nevertheless, the step taken by the greater part of our men of fortune, who, not contented with drawing a woman into their irregularities, will endeavour to justify them to themselves by demolishing all ideas of order, which they maintain are inconvenient prejudices. It is necessary, in order to match the lover with his mistress, that both should have thrown off the yoke of truth and modesty.

These are not suppositions dictated by whim or spite: nothing is so common in the present day as these agreeable men, who, by insinuating themselves among the women, under the outside of politeness and wit, seek to overcome their scruples, and to annihilate in them all propriety of behaviour. It so much more requires the women to guard themselves against the attacks of these seducers; for they adopt readily the sentiments of those who have crept into their affections, and their minds are too frequently biassed by their hearts.

This is what love is, when only grounded upon voluptuousness.

They had better draw flattering descriptions of them in prose and verse: all these loves, so chanted, are most frequently only vice disguised.

They may cause, for a time, a lively forwardness, and soft transports; but all that has no longer duration than while the senses remain inflamed; and the most bitter chag-

rim succeeds this short delirium of the imagination.

In one word, love alone, and detached from every other sentiment, is but a transitory fire, which extinguishes itself as soon as it is familiar with the object which gave it birth. It does not really fill the soul but when united to a more solid sentiment.

Love destroys and consumes itself, unless upheld by a tender benevolence, which is not felt but in upright and virtuous hearts; benevolence, which luxury and voluptuousness have caused to disappear, by substituting a coquetry, which always leaves the heart barren.

In order for love to be constant and durable, it is necessary it should contract a close alliance with friendship: these two sentiments joined, support and add their mutual strength.

Love, by this union, becomes more solid; friendship becomes more tender; and their shafts, sharpened one by the other, become more poignant.

214. FRIEND OF WOMEN.

The union of such soft sentiments cannot fail of improving the heart, instead of corrupting it.

Two lovers are, then, tender friends, filled with zeal and esteem for each other; they think highly of each other; feel and express themselves in unison. Far distanced from distrust, and wishing to fly from a knot they cannot break, they only fear being separated. They are ready to give up one to the other, and yield more if they could.

Such a love is not a frivolous amusement, followed by a parting or vanity. It fills and possesses itself of all the faculties: mind and heart, the imagination, the memory, all feel an agreeable warmth.

It is the most important action of life for a delicate woman to give her heart: it behoves her to take good care that she gives it up wholly; and she will do well to examine to whom she is about to make such a gift.

CHAP. IX.

ON MARRIAGE.

"Every where that there is a man, a woman, and subsistence, they marry," said the author of *L'Esprit des Loix*. In truth, love draws the men, by an invincible power, towards the fair sex, who see, with delight, the effect of their charms; and the reasonable end of love being only a fixed and constant union, one ought always to accompany the other.

We are all called to this charming society:—it is a tie against which we cannot kick without madness. What shall we think, then, of those unsettled minds, who, declared enemies to marriage, make it a point of honour to turn it into ridicule? What use do we see them make of this liberty, which

they so frequently boast of? It is a more overwhelming weight to them than the engagement they shun would be; and it embarrasses them so much, that they sooner or later, sacrifice it to the most despicable objects.

Men, who have passed the early part of life in libertinism, accuse the whole sex of the vices of some women of *easy virtue*, whom they have frequented, and pass upon all an equally injurious judgment; from thence the scoffs against those who esteem them sufficiently to be willing to unite themselves with them. They speak of marriage as if infidelity and treachery were inseparable; a language which pronounces him who holds it a downright depraved person. It is, in the present day, one of the common subjects upon which the low-witted scold fail cracking their insipid jests; and it appears that they have plotted a conspiracy to banish all legitimate births, in discrediting the most amiable of all engagements.

If these men had a decided aversion for women, and fled from all commerce with them, we should only pity them, in seeing them deprive themselves of a great share of the pleasures of society; but we are forced to hate them when we see them, adhere to the steps of those they despise and discourse of an amour which answers no other end than that of exposing the shame of those they love and their own.

They laugh at the ruinous slavery to which they frequently reduce a woman, rejected from society for the whole of her life. The sex is then thoroughly revenged; for since men must, in whatever way it may be, live under the law of women, against whom they have said so much ill, and whom they adore, it is better to receive it from a virtuous wife than a perfidious mistress.

But men are never in unison with themselves: they all follow love with ardor, and decry the conjugal knot. But it appears, if love, which they seek, gives some deli-

cate pleasures, the conjugal friendship, which so many men avoid, ought to furnish more lasting and refined ones.

The love for a mistress is, the greater part of the time, only fiddle-faddle dalliance and lies; and proposes nothing praise worthy.

She whom he takes for a wife has the groundwork of a great number of solid and agreeable qualities; and is always in accord with virtue and honour.

One is the burning of a fever; the other is the cool temperature of a man in health.

It may be said, to the praise of women, that they are less inconsiderate than us, and shew more courage, although the kind of dependance inseparable from marriage, makes it more perilous for them.

They are always decided in giving themselves up to what they love; and it is hardly necessary to invite the fair sex to listen to an engagement.

The retirement to which custom has condemned young girls, as well as a soft kind-

heartedness, speaks in our favour: all young women consent, with blushes, to the proposal which is made them to become wives; but all are not equally disposed to take the proper steps to remain long happy and cherished wives.

Two things are necessary to render a marriage happy....the choice of a husband, and their behaviour to each other.

With regard to choice, it is not, generally, at the sole disposal of the parties interested. A girl would be, from her first entrance into the world, a dupe to an exterior pleasantness and shew; and would give her hand to a man the most unworthy to possess it, if the experience which she is deficient in was not supplied by that of her relations. Happily for young women, these are they who will point out the persons to whom they may reasonably attach themselves; and their hearts ought not to declare themselves without having consulted them.

It is they will say, a very hard law for the heart, that it should subject its impulses to the will and choice of others.

To judge of them otherwise, it is only necessary to reflect upon the happiness that would follow the abolishing of this law. It is the only means of warding off seduction: it is a useful violence, the motive of which is the snatching inconsiderate youth from certain ruin.

Moreover, as considerate parents do not dispose of the hearts of their daughters without their approbation, this approbation agreeing with their's, assures them of the propriety of the choice. The parents require a man to possess fortune and honour; these are requisite to make marriage agreeable and honourable. The young person requires an agreeableness and compliance: these qualities are very necessary to make an union pleasant.

These expectations, which do not hurt, add equally to the happiness of husbands;

and the uniting these advantages only make a marriage the happier.

In whatever hands this important examination may be, the choice of a friend and inseparable companion ought to be well weighed; and it should not be determined either by avarice or caprice. We see but too many women groaning under the slavery of men without honour, whose fortune dazzled them; whilst an infinite number of others detest the mad love which united them to the weakest of silly women, incapable of assisting towards the support of their family.

It is, then, in vain for two lovers, smitten with each other, to flatter themselves with the enjoyment of a long felicity, if they are only brought together by allurements or fortune:—these are advantages which should neither be wholly neglected nor entirely sought after. But there are greater essentials, which have a more direct connexion with happiness:—the character and manners should be principally considered.

The greatest charm in a man is real merit, which distinguishes him in the world, and reflects upon his wife. She is soon disgusted with a husband in whom she finds only a cunning disposition, a little prattling, and nothing more than what she meets with in the generality of his sex. It is by being infatuated with a false merit that we see so many married people discontented. A lively woman languishes near a handsome man without spirit; another complains of a husband as light and frivolous as herself; others loaded with golden chains, are very rich and very unhappy. If the imprudence of their choice has plunged them into a wearinessomeness, one part of the ill of which they complain may well be imputed to the way in which they behave to a husband who begins to displease.

The first law that should be imposed upon husbands, is, to prohibit all examinations, and every regret, after marriage is celebrated. They cannot examine too minutely the qualities of the person with

whom they are about to unite themselves; but they cannot on the next day shew too great indulgences to each other. If they find faults which they did not suspect, there are to be found, also, in the same person, good qualities, which had escaped notice. Nothing is perfect in human nature; and it is by having listened too much to a blind love, and by having promised themselves good things, which do not exist, that lovers, becoming husbands, find themselves sometimes disconcerted.

The great fault of lovers, is, looking upon the person beloved as a divinity, whom they imagine should be faultless.

New Pygmalions, they create a fantastical, agreeable, object, whom they figure to themselves that she resembles; when, afterwards, they perceive she wants some features in the resemblance of the chimerical object with which they were smitten, they afflict themselves, and complain of that which had charmed them. She is, nevertheless, always the same; and the weakness

attached to human nature is frequently her only crime.

This hope of a chimerical happiness is founded upon another object, which makes many women murmur improperly.

They wish love to be preserved, in all its ardor, from its first commencement; and complain of not being loved any longer when these transports are diminished:—dangerous effect of the indiscreet ardour of husbands, who, little masters of their first flame, shew to their newly-married wives an excessive love, which cannot last at that height!—A woman habituated to the flattering illusions of too lively a passion, would perpetuate this intoxication, and can no more submit to the calm which succeeds it.

It is, nevertheless, to this calm it must, of necessity, return; it is what they may wish for as the greatest happiness; the leading back love to the moderate movements of a tender friendship. Then an habitual mildness will fill the void of love, which becomes calm: and the enticements of confi-

dence succeed the transports of passion. It is this tender trust which alone can lay the foundation of lasting happiness. *It fears not time*, the destroyer of love. It forms and establishes itself, in the strongest manner, between married persons who esteem each other, and seek constantly to please.

Nothing is to be compared to their state ; —it offers, at once, the pleasures of the senses,—those of reason ; and unites all the charms of life.

There are required, indeed, many resources in the soul to keep this friendship always alive, and make the society interesting, after being habituated to it many years ; but, also, the mind, in ripening, acquires, if we may say it, a consistency which enables it to fix for itself.

In the bloom of youth, the minds of women have an unsteadiness which leads them from object to object ; and it is not till after they have quitted the vanity of their early youth, that they are in a state to enjoy the

delicious pleasure of being alone with those they love.

Marriage is an engagement very easy to be entered into; but to discharge worthily the duties of it, and to fulfil all those of a private life, requires, perhaps, as much virtue as is requisite to fill the most brilliant and distinguished situation.

The greatest personages have always furnished remarkable examples of conjugal love. Penelope, Andromache, Portia, Cornelia, were models of this kind. Artemisa wept all her life for a husband, with whose ashes she wished her own to be mixed in his urn. Marcus Aurelius and Cæsar tenderly loved their wives; and Pliny wrote to the aunt of his—" We thank you: me, inasmuch as she is my wife;—her, that I am her husband; both, that you have united two persons made for each other."

All these bridegrooms were endued with great good-nature, and a strength of mind more necessary than is generally considered for the preservation of peace.

The communication of ideas, and the mixture of interests, often occasion divisions, if one of the two knows not how to bring the other back.

Weak minds, incapable of giving up any thing, lay down their whims for laws; become cross-grained about nothing; and give birth to a thousand bickerings, which insensibly affects their union. Alas! we see but few marriages which do not leave something to be wished for in regard to humour and concord.

We ought, notwithstanding, to be less surprised, when we remark the contrast that is met with in the behaviour of the lover and that of the husband. It seems as if men and women only sought to ensnare each other. They deck themselves out with the greatest care, and anticipate the most trifling things, before the contract; but all these attentions are but of short duration. The sweetheart, become a wife, instead of endeavouring to render herself more amiable, neglects herself; lays aside

those talents with which she was ornamented. The lover, become a husband, disappears, and absents himself. They fall into a crabbed familiarity, and each gives, sometimes, causes for jealousy, which strike a mortal blow at tenderness.

That is the rock which is most to be dreaded by love. Nothing alienates the heart more than the dissipated airs of an indiscreet coquetry.—This fault is very common, in the present day, among our women of fashion; and there are some among them, who, accustomed to a blustering way from a most inconsiderate youth, only look upon a prudent and wise husband as a courteous steward. They think him too happy in furnishing towards the expense of their pleasures, in which they never include him.

It is hard, then, to prevent that delicacy which is inseparable from love from being alarmed; and these justified inquietudes should not be confounded with the black

fits of a jealousy which tyrannizes over virtue.

All these misfortunes, and a number of others, which every day aggravate, are *not* the necessary consequences of marriage, but only of the folly of some persons, and should not be laid generally. There are fewer unhappy marriages than there are said to be; and those even which are looked upon as such have their sweets.

I am certain, if divorces were permitted among us, we should see a much smaller number of husbands separated than the spiteful pleasantry of ill-natured wits suppose. Divorce was permitted at Rome, and we only meet with one in the course of five hundred years.

Again;—if we meet with women of an unaccommodating disposition, there are found a much greater number of peevish and unjust husbands. Whoever searches into causes of domestic strife, will find there are few to which the husband has not given rise, for want of prudence or moderation.

The greater part suffer themselves to be led by them, at first, like children; and are afterwards uselessly desirous of assuming a government which they have lost by their own fault; others unite violence and freaks with an intermitting tenderness, which an enraged woman does not always take in good part. There are those who even refuse their husbands what is indispensably necessary. Many set the example of a most abandoned life. Have such husbands any right to complain, if their wives do not possess the nature of angels, and fail in complaisance to a brute, to whom they are united?

A man of a good-tempered disposition knows how, *without violence*, to bring back his wife to the right path, if she has wandered from it; he knows how to excuse her some slight faults, which he looks upon as a small tribute, that saves her from greater imperfections. This is the true philosophy to which all married men should accustom themselves. Socrates, who married Xan-

tippe, a woman of *rather* a difficult temper to please, was not the more averse to the marriage knot; and he spoke of it, one day before a numerous assembly, in such honourable terms, and placed all its advantages in so favourable a point of view, that all his hearers got married within the year. Finally, although the enemies of marriage say, if it is the means of happiness here below, it ought to be by the bonds of a well-selected marriage, which bind two persons attached to each other, as much by their inclinations as by the obligation they have entered into. Such husbands regulate themselves more by the taste they have for each other than by fashion. The husband, far from blushing to appear with his wife, never finds himself happier than in her company, who communicates to him pleasure and good-humour. The wife, in her turn, finds, in the conversation of a complaisant husband, instruction, which his tenderness renders dear to her. It is from *him* she loves to receive truths, which

he knows how to adapt to her understanding, and season with some obliging turn:—she only learns well of such a master.———“Without the kisses of Adam, Eve would have understood nothing.”

Every thing brings to the recollection of an affectionate wife the object whom she loves: his name, his rank, recalls to her, without ceasing, him to whom she has given her heart.

Each of these married persons finds in the other a lover, a friend, an adviser, and a witness of each other's worth: pleasures are doubled by being shared; and, with a tender consoler, small troubles, which are inseparable from human life, are borne lightly.

CHAP. X.

EDUCATION OF CHILDREN.

HOWEVER tender the sentiments of a father may be towards his children, there is found in the breasts of mothers yearnings, of a more lively affection.

The heart of a woman, when not given to the wanderings of the passions, devotes all her affections to a family, whose delight she is; and there are not in Nature ties that can be compared to those which unite a tender mother to her children, who pay her with a return of gratitude.

This sweet empire, cemented by kindness and gratitude, forms the whole glory and felicity of a wise woman.

“Behold, *there* are my diamonds, and my jewels,” said the illustrious mother of

the Gracchi, in shewing her children, whom she herself had educated.

With such ornaments, destined to brighten and serve society usefully—throwing more eclat upon a woman than all the precious stones of the East would do—let not an amiable woman fear that being a mother will hurt her charms: it will only multiply them, in re-producing her features upon a group of sweet pretty children, who would be seen, with pleasure, at her side.

Her triumph is in being surrounded with these precious fruits of her love, and to share with them her caresses. It is astonishing, that a destructive prejudice has caused opposite ideas to be received: women blush at having many children, and they keep them, with care, at a distance from them. Hurtful advice of a coquetry quite opposite to Nature!

It is by a succession of this false delicacy that a woman, possessing every thing that is necessary to suckle her children, has recourse to forced means to get rid of that

milk they crave of her; and exposes herself to the greatest danger rather than fulfil this duty. She puts in her place a hired woman, who has neither tenderness nor pity for the precious deposit which is given to her care.

Is it astonishing that the health, and even the constitutions, of children suffer so frequently from the little care of persons who only keep them for a very moderate salary?

But it is not only the constitution which is in danger, with a nurse who is full of gross humours and bad blood; the affinity which exists between physic and morality ought to make us fear much more for their inclinations and character. Diodorus, of Sicily, relates, that the nurse of Nero was much given to wine, a vice which was the first cause of the frenzy of that Emperor. "The nurse of the sanguinary Caligula," says the same author, "rubbed her breasts with blood."

It has always been remarked, that the tempers and qualities of nurses passed into

children with the milk. From that arose the fictions of Romulus, Telephus, Pelias, Egestus, &c. being suckled by animals, whose dispositions they pretend they imbibed. We every day see children of the most creditable citizens suckled by persons the very dregs of the people, and they imbibe all their inclinations. Is not this sufficient to determine mothers not to expose their children to this danger?

I will not relate here all that the friends of humanity have said upon this important subject. I will only add, that it is the same with a child brought up with the milk of a stranger, as a plant brought from a foreign land, both which, it is much feared, will degenerate. Nature has in no case put so exact an affinity as that which is in the constitution of the mother and child: both, for the space of nine months, made but one whole. The mother was compelled, during that time, to nourish the child with her own substance: it is now become an obligation for her to continue it.

There are, indeed, cases, where of two evils we should avoid the greatest, which shall be that of suckling; but these cases which dispense with it are very scarce, and the mother is then as much to be pitied as the child. In the natural state, ever woman who has strength to bring a child into the world, has assuredly, also, that of suckling it. Her own interest also, powerfully invites her to it: she is well paid for her cares by a sudden re-establishment and vigorous health; and we should see fewer megrims, vapours, and other accidents, if there were more city-nurses.

But let us leave the women to please themselves in increasing charms, which, nevertheless, were not given them merely for shew; let us invite the women to deserve, at least, the title of mother, by cares which will establish them better than a birth. This is only the consequence of an instinct, which has but little merit in it: the education which people give to their children is an act of choice and virtue. What would

you think of a mother, scarce delivered of a child which very frequently has only been borne with regret, who sends it sixty or one hundred miles from her, committed to the successive cares of divers mercenary persons, at the lowest price, till the college or a school receives, for several years, these dear children, who hardly know them?

Nothing can justify this wonderful indifference. The noblest employment for a mother, is, to form early the heart and mind of her children; she *owes* them their first instructions. This first culture decides the fate of these young plants; and the impressions they receive at this tender age are never effaced. How, then, can they entrust so essential an object to inattentive, clownish, and often vicious servants? It is nothing but an excessive self-love which can blind the eyes to the consequences of such an indiscreet trust.

To excuse the rights of maternal tenderness, women of a fine figure have a thousand reasons, as frivolous as themselves. There

is but one that they do not allege and improve upon, to get their daughters removed from them—it is the danger of a bad example. In truth, when we examine the kind of education that girls receive from such mothers, we may fear every thing for their innocence.

What they call in a certain rank of life, a fine education (very different from a good education) can only prepare a young person for speedy ruin.

It appears, that all the rules of the education they give her are reducible to the teaching her the dangerous art of pleasing. Hardly is a girl weaned, before they talk to her of charms and dress. They consign her to a dancing-master, who teaches her to carry her head in a constrained way, to project her bosom, and to move all of a piece: a singing-master comes next to regulate her voice, and make her repeat silly rondeaus: she is incessantly discoursed with upon a good air, of exterior graces, which they give her to understand are to

decide her rank in society: never do they hear one word said about good-nature, judgment, and correctness of understanding. What is the consequence?

The little personage fixes all these things in her head; keeps herself very upright, sings, prims herself up, becomes a very pretty doll; but she has nothing in her mind but trifles.

They do right in not neglecting the air and turn of the body: the graces are a great point; but they do not require so much preparation. The evil consists in their only attending to form the height, the voice, and the deportment of a girl, and pay but little attention to the mind; which has, nevertheless, more need of being formed than the body. Whilst they only occupy themselves with this, the mind remains fallow; and, according to the preference they give to one or the other, the body expresses the qualities of the soul, or draws it into its inclinations.

But a mother, who has been occupied her whole life with her charms only, is satisfied in having a daughter who resembles her: she has no other desire but that of seeing her agreeable; and thus is perpetuated, from mother to daughter, a numerous generation of coquettes.

Children generally resemble their parents. The fathers and mothers are models, which respect and custom naturally dispose them to imitate: their example is a powerful lesson; and they cannot believe how much impression quarrels between married persons, passions, &c. make upon young children, who remark things much more than it is thought. Their minds, barren of ideas, furnish themselves with every thing they see: the excesses of which they are witnesses, leave in them deep impressions, which renew themselves when they are afterwards in the same circumstances. In general, men would be better, if those who brought them into the world knew themselves more, and were wiser.

CHAP. XI.

OF DOMESTIC GOVERNMENT.

HERE is the triumph of a good woman, and her true calling. Our pretty women had better not know than disdain their rights: it is to the government of their families that Nature calls them; and they are never right but when they are what Nature would have them be.

But to whom are these tender laws known in our days? Our luxury seems, in the present day, desirous of confounding every thing; and, whilst men affect the delicacy, and lead the effeminate lives of women, these latter have got a taste for the dissipation and rovings so natural to men. Their houses, open for gaming and wits, are become a kind of public places, where

the family is hardly perceived. The attachments formed by nature are replaced by a routine of frivolous persons, who take up the whole time a woman has left from sleep and the toilet.

It is a surprising thing what a change of ideas vanity and a false air produce: the most sacred duties are looked upon as disgraceful, whilst the smallest trifles and the meanest employments are extolled. Such a woman runs from one gaming-house to another, deriving a mean profit from cards, who would blush at being caught dressing her children.

Women!—know better the source of your pleasures, and the foundation of your glory! You are mothers, and mistresses of families,—or destined to be so:—there is your empire!—Your chief honour is in keeping up good order and harmony: it is within your own house you ought to fix your happiness, which so many go in vain to seek for far from home.

She who has a taste for sobriety is soon discouraged from gadding; and sees nothing noble but in that kind of domestic royalty, which some women appear willing to abdicate; all parts of its administration are looked upon by them as tending to the same end, which is the support of the family she has the care of.

An object so dear to her heart awakens her vigilance and her activity. The happiness of a husband and children whom she loves are so closely united to her own blood, that she is more occupied with them than herself.

Through her, accommodation and neatness reign in the house:—to necessary and useful things are united all the conveniences which she can introduce. To effect all this, she enters into the minutest details, which are of great consequence when they attach to objects frequently repeated. Economy is the mother of Plenty, and is necessary for the upholding of the most opulent houses; it is a quality with which Nature

has singularly gifted women; carried as far in men, it would be meanness and avarice; but it is indispensable in women, employed, by nature, in an infinite number of details, which we ought to repose the management of in them.

Such is the distribution made by Nature herself. Man is not called to labour, in order that his dear half should have no other employment than that of dissipating the fruits of it.

All that regards the inside of the house is the business of the wife, as the business without is that of the husband; and this interior of the house comprises many things, and calls for many cares. A woman who acquires herself well of that task, fully compensates for the labours of the husband.

Man is the arm; he bears the weight of labour: but the woman is the eye; she watches over every thing, at all times: it is through the keenness of her sight that it is reserved for her to perceive every thing that

is for the benefit of the family. What cares are there not daily required for the details of the table, of lodging, and company? What a continual attention to bring up her children properly, and to govern them according to their dispositions! The daughters are early associated by the mother in her duties; and her example is an excellent instructor for them. A daughter who has assisted in making the charms of a private life predominate in her father's house, will consequently make it reign in that of her husband. And it is thus that the race of careful and attentive wives are perpetuated.

All these duties, so simple, and, nevertheless, so exalted, preserve a woman from coquetry and passions. Her regular and uniform conduct keeps her soul in equilibrium, which influences her temper. For it is a false notion that the partizans of tumult have conceived of a prudent woman —that she is always very serious, and looks upon her duties as naturally melancholy. What authorises this opinion, is, the con-

duct of some women, who, living retired in their houses, preserves there a taciturnity which drives away both the husband and his friends.

If they were to examine attentively these women, it is with them as with false devotees, who consider their moroseness and false zeal as virtues. The greater part cherish some gloomy passion, which devotes them to retirement, and shuts them up in a house, where they revenge themselves on all who surround them.

But the wise and active woman bears no resemblance to these sorrowful victims to melancholy. She possesses an habitual serenity, which always accompanies true virtue, and is never imperious or peevish. She knows that caresses and insinuating ways are the arms of her sex; that her reign is that of mildness, a quality to which the most inflexible husband is forced to yield: it is always the fault of the woman if the husband does not enter into her views for their common interest. She is not born to

command; but she is in a state to govern him who commands: when persuasion is habitually on her lips, every thing is only ameliorated; and it has been remarked, that the best managers are those, where the women had the greatest authority.

That mildness which characterises the government of women, ought to extend itself over all who are under them; the children have the first right to it, since the temper of a mother has but too much influence upon her children. Every woman whom vicious institutions have not depraved, has no occasion for a lesson on this head; it would rather be necessary to recommend them not to hurt them by an excess of tenderness and indulgence.

But it is not the same with domestics, whom the women are disposed to treat with a severity that discourages them. It cannot be too frequently repeated to them, that they will never be well served if they are not beloved. Servants are people more susceptible of attachment and gratitude than

they think: if they owe fidelity and obedience to their mistresses, they owe them, in return, protection and good will. They should interest themselves in their fate, watch over their manners: they form a part of the family; and it concerns them that no one in it should be unhappy or vicious.

Let them not be afraid that all these details, which the mistress of a family is obliged to trouble herself about, either injure her mind or disposition.

It is idleness, and the wearisomeness that accompanies it, which gives birth to whims, fancies, caprices, and all those alternatives which so much lower the sex in estimation: the mind which does not fix itself upon some object becomes uneasy, and intermeddling; but when, in the course of an active life, a recreation is taken opportunely, caused by useful occupations, the mind then displays itself with grace and freedom. To do the honours of a house, after having provided so that every thing is in order, is one of the essential duties of the wife: she knows all

the value of society; it is a desire of the soul, which she feels better than any other.

It is true, that this society will be selected according to her own taste. It will not be a swarm of our fashionable men, to whom pomp and a little babbling about nothing give currency. There is no true society but where esteem and friendship reign. In a small number of men thus selected, you behold, there, the whole world, to sensible minds.

It is there, as in the midst of friends, that a reciprocal confidence makes people comfortable. An amiable and wise woman knows how to brighten her wit, and joke innocently. The husband is not one too many in such a circle; the sentiments which his wife exhibits are of a nature that do her honour; and every one there is satisfied with himself and others. To keep house, is, not for a woman to furnish herself on every side with an insipid jargon of gallantry, or discourses sharpened by malignity; it is to share with a husband all the

attentions they owe to obliging people who visit them, and whom friendship brings to their house.

We must confess, to the honour of women, that in this respect they far surpass us; their politeness is more constant, and less constrained, than our's. As they feel more acutely, and have a finer perception than us, they perceive with a glance what is suitable to every one, and pay them an infinite number of small attentions which escape us. Sensible men see clearly, in an extended point of view, the advantages of society; but the minute observations, the art of foresight, and of making herself understood without explaining,—all that is natural to women, and only belongs to them.

I cannot better confirm all this, than by the picture which has been so well drawn by the author of *Emilius*; who compares the ways by which a husband and a wife equally polish each other, and equally animated with the desire of receiving their vi-

sitors handsomely, take upon themselves to do the honours of their house.

“ The husband,” says this excellent observer, “ omits no care; he goes and comes: the wife remains in her place; a small circle is formed around her, and appears to hide her from the rest of the company: nevertheless, there is nothing passes that she does not perceive; no one goes out to whom she has not spoken; she has omitted nothing that could interest every one; she has said nothing to any one that was not agreeable to them, and without breaking through order. The person of smallest consequence in the company is no more forgot than those of the greatest. The table is covered; they sit down. The man, acquainted with the persons who are assembled, places them according to his knowledge. The woman, without knowing any thing, is not deceived. She will have already read, in the eyes and in the deportment of all, their satisfaction; and all find themselves seated where they would wish

to be. The husband may have forgot to serve some one; but the wife, guessing what they are looking for, presently supplies them. In speaking to her neighbour, she has her eye about the table; she sees who does not eat. In quitting the table, every one thinks she has paid attention to none but themselves."

Who does not observe here, what has passed a hundred times under their own observation? In a word, the talent of women is to do every thing gracefully, and without an embarrassed air; and this presence of mind, which makes them think of every thing, and multiplies attentions in them, is much more striking in the woman of reflection, than in those whom dissipation and gadding have degenerated into a new race of *petits-maitres*.

CHAP. XII.

VIRTUES OF WOMEN.

If the women esteemed themselves according to their merit, they would not shut themselves up in a small circle of amusements which keeps them always in childhood. When they adopt, of themselves, such little ideas, they can never after rise above the rank in which they have placed themselves. To produce generous acts, it is necessary to think of one's self more nobly, and labour rather to extend the sphere of one's thoughts than to narrow it.

As soon as a woman wishes to raise herself above all the trifling objects which debase her, her mind will find itself capable of the same strength as that of men.

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Mind has no sex; and women cannot be made too frequently to recollect this truth, to preserve them from all those frivolities in which they appear to have placed their whole happiness.

Oh! that women, then, would but know their rights, and improve them to their advantage and ours!

They have given us examples of the most exalted virtues; very powerful examples to us, which a tender inclination for them induces us to follow. We shall always be what the women would have us: it is in their power to change to good or ill the face of society, and to give to men the form they would have them take.

The most indispensable of their virtues, and that which gives them most credit among us, is modesty. This amiable virtue has such an influence upon the features, air, mind, and character, that every thing is disgusting to us where it is wanting. It is in that the point of honour in women consists,

as ours does in strength of mind and courage.

Persons without sense or feeling hearts may possibly reject both points of honour as prejudices of education. Those who judge more justly, respect them not as indifferent establishments, but as rules founded upon Nature, and even the constitution of humanity. As it is essential to the good of society that men should be endued with a proper courage for external defence, it is also necessary that women should have, on their part, a discretion and a modesty alone capable of rendering their society peaceable and interesting at home.

Our ancestors, persons of as good understandings as ourselves, concentrated all the virtues in these two principal ones—courage in men, and chastity in women. All the ancients revolve upon these two points: knights overthrew dreadful giants, whilst their beauties resisted the severest trials. If writings are the mirrors of the manners, the romances of the present day will as-

suredly not attest the purity of ours to future generations.

It is deviating from my subject to speak of the point of honour in men ; but for that of women, experience has justified it, that it is very justly placed in modesty. The want of this virtue makes all the others which are its inseparable companions disappear ; and it is relatively to it that we may say women are either better or worse than men. When once they have renounced this decency, which is the greatest merit of their sex, there is no excess of which they are not capable. A woman without modesty will disturb a kingdom as well as a private family. It was women of this character who stirred up the flames of La Fronde ; and France remembers yet, with grief, the shameful intrigues and crimes of an Isabella of Bavaria.

Happily we see but a very small number of women so void of a modesty that appears born with them : it is only by repeated underminings that some succeed

in destroying in them this precious instinct. Those deserve no longer to be reckoned among the sex, who have abjured all the virtues, and dispute the palm of impudence with the most brazen-faced of ours.

In suppressing this vicious part of the society, more deserving of our disdain than our attentions, it is certain, and we can say it without flattering the women too much, that they have better hearts than men; are tenderer and more compassionate.

I appeal to sick husbands, who have been whole years objects of the attentions of amiable wives, who have almost buried themselves with them. Nothing is more common than to see women watch and assiduously take care of their relations or friends, whilst men confine their cares to advice, and some short visits.

We naturally have in our heads so many things that are distinct from it, that we are hardly ever guided by it. Women, on the contrary, solely attentive to its voice, scarcely ever wander from the soft laws

which she has prescribed them. We had had one very striking example of it, in the unhappy times when fanaticism seemed to have hardened the hearts of a whole nation, in the trial where Cromwell made his king undergo an unworthy examination. The women, hearing disgraceful questions put to this unfortunate prince, all cried out, That he was their king, and was not condemned. They addressed themselves so sharply to Cromwell, and murmured so much, that he was obliged to compel them to retire.

This prodigious depth of sensibility which is met with in women, is both for themselves and us a fruitful source of delicate pleasures, and also sometimes of bitter pains. Sentiment guides them in every thing; it is born, lives, and dies with them; and produces in every age those amiable virtues which we admit them to cherish, as likewise those particular vices with which we reproach them.

The more sensible a heart is, the more susceptible it is of jealousy, spite, and vengeance, when it is offended. The wounds of the heart heal but slowly; and a tender woman bears all her life the recollection of such a wound.

But whatever mixture of good and ill we may admit to exist in women, we must always agree that they are generally truer in their affections, that they have a greater regard to honour, more fidelity and constancy, and that they lead better regulated lives than the greater part of men.

How many could we not find among those who distinguish themselves in the management of their houses, the education of their children, and attachment to their husbands? But these are not the women who shew themselves the most. Virtue is as desirous of concealing itself, as vice loves to shew itself.

This sometimes makes people judge unjustly of the sex; it is their modesty alone which keeps their virtues in the shade; this

modesty, and this silence, are, nevertheless, their greatest virtue. The glory of women is, to make themselves but little talked of: very different from men, who play, with an unabashed countenance, upon the great theatre of the world, all the parts which the passions dispose them to. Women should only act, as one may say, behind the curtain: they cannot appear upon the stage until particular circumstances lead them there; and then we have seen them shine, and fill the greatest parts with as much dignity as the most celebrated men.

Indeed, what are the species of merit by which women are not distinguished? The belles lettres claim, as their ornaments, a great number of them, whose names are consecrated to immortality. The highest academic reward was decreed to Mademoiselle Scudery.

The women have not degenerated: there are many at this time among us, whose success has made them sufficiently known without my naming them, and who, conjunctive-

ly with us, reap the golden harvest in the fertile field of history and philosophy.

The city of Boulogne boasted, a short time since, of a mathematical chair filled by the celebrated Agnezy; and another of eloquence filled by a woman, from whom the men came in crowds to receive lessons.

But to speak of objects which, without being greater in themselves, appear so in the eyes of the multitude, how many of the highest situations have been filled by women? We have seen the Countess of Guésbriand acquit herself of an extraordinary embassy with all the dignity required from such a character. The greatest affairs are not above the talents of certain women. The Pulcherias, Sophias, Athenais, Irenes, Marguerite Valdeimar, Blanches de Castille, and a number of other princesses, possessed the science of government in the highest degree. And Catharine de Foix, wife of Jean d'Albert, King of Navarre, felt clearly her superiority, when she said to her

husband, dispossessed by Ferdinand; "Don Jean, if we had been born, you Catherine and me John, we should never have lost Navarre."

By only running history over a little, we find every where proofs of the vigour of which the sex are sometimes capable. They saw at Rome, at the side of a Scévola, a Clelia boldly cross the Tiber, in swimming, in the midst of a shower of darts.

At the time when all bent under the tyranny of the Triumvirs, the daughter of Hortensius, braving their cruelty, alone dared to defend the Roman ladies. And in the fury of proscriptions, we see Arie encouraging her husband to death; and presenting him the poignard, dyed with her blood, assuring him, coolly, "that it did not hurt!"

It is not warlike ardour that makes women shine; for these sanguinary virtues do not appear to be their province. Without speaking of the famous Joan d'Arc, the Judith of the fifteenth age, our alma-

nacks have consecrated a Jeanne Hachette, who, at the head of women, delivered Beauvais, reduced to the greatest extremity by the Duke of Burgundy. At the same time England saw Marguerite d'Anjou, wife of Henry VI, gain a battle in person, deliver Henry, who was a prisoner, and replace him upon the throne.

Brittany remembers, also, that courageous Countess of Montfort, who, in the heat of battle, carried her son from rank to rank, and animated her soldiers in the defence of a state which she was so worthy to govern. And under Louis XIII. (in more voluptuous times), the Duchess of Rohan was seen defending Rochelle for a year against all the forces of the king, and the ability of his minister; an action that would have merited more eulogiums, if the Duchess of Rohan had supported a better cause. The history of every country furnishes similar examples: all attest that women have frequently shared with us in an intrepidity which, it appears, should have

belonged to us to their entire exclusion—Boadicea, queen of the antient Britons—a Renée de Clermont d'Amboise—a Blanche, the wife of Jean Baptiste de la Porte, more to be admired than Lucretia of old; taken in the small city of Basfano, which she defended after the loss of her husband; and on the brink of being violated by Acciolin she threw herself out of a window; they took her back to this barbarian, from whom she obtained permission to pay the last duties to her husband. She entered into his tomb, made an effort to pull down the stone, that covered it, upon her, and buried herself with the precious remains of a husband to whom she died faithful.

The same heroism is met with in private life: Madame de Villacerf, brought to death in the flower of her age by the unskilfulness of her surgeon, comforted him herself:—“ I do not look upon you,” she said, in dying, “ as a person whose error has cost me my life, but as a benefactor, who advances my entry into a happy immortality. *As the*

world may judge otherwise, I have put you in a situation, by my will, to quit your profession," such a nobleness of soul is not to be acquired in an instant; it is the consequence of a long practice of goodness; and the life of such a woman, well understood, will furnish more useful lessons than the history of battles, and the famous massacres, celebrated by so many writers.

In the time that Louis XIV. filled all Europe with his name, they spoke but little of Marie-Theresa, of Austria; nevertheless what strength did it not require that princess should possess, to oppose to her sorrows a conduct which made Louis XIV. say, in quitting her, " That's the first chagrin which she has given me?"

The illustrious Marchioness de Maintenon, whose wit and mildness were the consolation of the last years of this monarch, had, also, troubles proportionate to the elevation to which she attained. In every situation, she preserved a moderation and evenness of soul, which shews itself in

her letters: we see every where, in them, a woman superior even to her letters: we see every where in them, a woman superior even to her fortune:—some further account of this lady may not be disagreeable to my readers.

THE LIFE OF THE CELEBRATED MADAME
DE MAINTENON.

This extraordinary French lady, who, from several strokes of fortune, became the favourite, and, at length, the wife of Louis XIV. was descended from the antient family of Daubigne: her ancestors were zealous friends to the Protestant cause. Her grandfather, being obliged to quit his native country, on account of the severe attacks made on the Protestants, resided many years at Geneva. Her father, however, did not inherit the virtues of his ancestors; but having pursued a course of profligacy and

villainy, was at length thrown into prison. The strong affection of his wife, who was daughter of Peter de Cardillac, Lord of Lane, led her voluntarily to accompany his confinement, where they lived several years, and had two sons, and a daughter the subject of these memoirs.

Mademoiselle Daubigné, afterwards Madame de Maintenon, was born the 27th of November, 1635. A few days after her birth, her aunt, Madame Villette, took her from the miserable abode of her parents, and gave her to the care of her daughter's nurse with whom she was brought up as a foster sister. At length Daubigné obtained his enlargement, through the intercession of his wife, on condition of his turning Catholic; but not fulfilling these his engagements, he was obliged to leave his country, and seek his fortune in America. He settled at Martinico, with his wife and family, and acquired considerable plantations there, which seemed to promise a comfortable subsistence; but, too

soon, a habit of gaming destroyed the fair prospect, and involved himself and family in ruin. His death, which happened soon after, left his unhappy widow in the utmost distress, to support herself and manage the education of her children. Thus situated, she returned to France, in 1646, leaving her debts unpaid, and her daughter, as a pledge, in the hands of her principal creditor, who, however, soon restored her to her mother. The extreme indigence of her parent depriving her of all support from thence, she was received by Madame Villette with her former kindness and affection. Here young Daubigné studied to recommend herself to the only person upon whom she saw she must depend for every thing, being particularly careful to insinuate herself into the affections of her cousin with whom she had passed her earliest infancy. Situated, now, in a Protestant family she expressed a great desire of being instructed in the religion of her ancestors: she was impatient to have some conversa-

tion with ministers, and to hear their sermons; and in a short time she became firmly attached to the Protestant religion. In the meantime, Madame de Nevillant, a relation by her mother's side and a Papist, interested herself very much on the score of our young protestant; she represented to some considerable persons the danger Daubigné was in, as to her eternal salvation, and obtained an order from court to take her out of the hands of Madame Villette. Thus authorized, she took her to her house, and by every means that bigotry, artifice, and severity could suggest worked upon the heart of her young ward. The natural vivacity of Daubigné, yet very young, which, perhaps, prevented her mind from receiving any deep impressions of the importance of religious truths, joined to her dependant state, which commanded a compliance to avoid the threats and hardships inflicted and threatened, made her a nominal proselyte to the tenets of Popery.

In 1651, she married the *Abbé Scarron*, a man famous for his wit and buffoonery (who subsisted on a pension granted him by the court); but in his person deformed and infirm: the uneasy and dependant life she led with *Madame Nevillant* precipitated her into this disadvantageous connexion. Her accomplishments began to break forth: her wit was lively and refined, which made her be caressed by the best companies in Paris. In person, she was not a finished beauty; but genteel, agreeable, and tolerably handsome. The death of *Scarron*, which happened in 1660, reduced her to a state of want. It is easy to conceive what must have been the sensations of a delicate mind, such as she possessed, to find herself obliged to look for relief from those friends whom she had ever conversed with on the footing of independence: these friends, however, exerted all their influence to obtain a grant of the pension to her which was enjoyed by her husband. The petitions presented to the King on this account were

so numerous, that at length he stopped them, by saying, “ Must I always be pestered with the Widow Scarron?” Notwithstanding this rebuff, the King afterwards settled a much larger pension on her; telling her, at the same time, “ Madam, I have withheld my bounty long; but you have many friends, and I was resolved the gift should be my own.”

In 1671, the Duke of Mayne, son of Louis XIV. by M. Monternan, being a child of a year old, on account of a defect in one of his feet, the physician advised him to be sent to the waters of Bareges: a person was wanted to whom such a trust might be safely committed; the King appointed Madam Scarron, from which time she had the care of the Duke of Mayne’s education. Whilst in this situation she had frequent occasion to write to the King:—her letters charmed him; *they* were the origin of her future grandeur; her personal merit, and great accomplishments, strengthened what these had formed. In 1679, the King present-

ed her with the lands of Maintenon; and, during the whole course of the time she enjoyed the love of a magnificent Monarch, she never made any other purchases, though in a height of favour that afforded the means of purchasing immense ones.

At Maintenon she had a magnificent castle, in a most beautiful country. The King, seeing her extremely pleased with the acquisition of her estate, called her publickly Madame Maintenon, which change of name was very necessary to precede the rank she was afterwards raised to; the very name of Scarron being a jest; and not all the reserve and dignity of the widow could efface the buffoonery of the husband.

Whilst Madame Maintenon thus possessed the heart of a mighty Monarch, she courted the seclusion of a private retreat: shut up in her apartment, which was on the same floor with the King's, she confined herself to the society of two or three ladies. The King came to her apartment every day: here he transacted business with his

ministers, while Madame de Maintenon employed herself in reading, or needle work, never shewing any eagerness to talk of state affairs, and carefully avoiding entering into any court cabal or intrigue. She studied more to please him who governed, than to govern; and preserved her influence, by employing it with the utmost circumspection.

She did not use her power to heap dignities on her relations. One of her brothers, though of long standing in the army, was not made even a mareschal of France: some appropriations in the farms of the revenue were all his fortune, and a blue ribbon was his only honorary distinction. The Duke de Noailles, who married his daughter, conferred an honour, without receiving any advantage from the alliance. Madame Villette, a niece of Madame Maintenon's, who was afterwards married to our celebrated Lord Bolingbroke, had nothing but expectations. Madame Maintenon made every thing subservient to her

fears of acting contrary to the King's sentiments; she did not even dare to support her relation, the Cardinal de Neailles, against the Father le Tellier. She had a great friendship for the celebrated poet Racine, but deserted him when exposed to the resentment of the King, which herself had raised. The poet having one day pathetically represented to her the miseries of the people, in 1698, she engaged him to draw up a memorial, stating the evil, and proposing the remedy. The King expressing some displeasure at the reading of it, his timorous mistress gave up the author.—“ Racine (says Voltaire), still weaker, felt it so strongly, as to occasion his death.” Such pusillanimity was, doubtless, a great stain upon her character; but whilst this temper shut those hands that might have opened with a large profusion of benefits, yet her candour to her enemies should be considered as some excuse for her neglect of her friends.

Though the minister Louvais threw himself at the feet of Louis XIV, to dissuade him from marrying Madame Scarron, yet she sincerely forgave him, and always used her endeavours to preserve him in the good graces of his master, who frequently resented the rough behaviour of this minister.

About the latter end of the year 1685, Louis XIV. married Madame Maintenon. He was then in his forty-eighth year, and she in her fiftieth: the ceremony was performed in the most private manner possible, and kept a profound secret afterwards.

The only public distinction she received by this elevation, was, that at mass she sat in one of the two little galleries, or gilt domes, which appeared only to be designed for the King and Queen.

That piety and devotion with which she had inspired the King, and employed, very successfully, to make herself a wife instead of a mistress, became, by degrees, a sincere and settled disposition of mind.

The court grew every day less gay, after the King began to live a retired life with Madame Maintenon.

She established a convent at St. Cyr, near Versailles, whither she often went to pass away some hours.

It does not appear that the elevation of her station served to enlarge her share of happiness; she had too much refinement to esteem the glare of a Court. In a letter to Madame Maisonfort, she writes thus: "Why may not I lay open my heart to you? Why cannot I make you sensible of that uneasiness which wears out the great, and of the difficulties they labour under to employ their time? Do you not see that I am dying with melancholy, in a height of fortune which once my imagination could scarcely have conceived? I have been young and beautiful; have had a relish for pleasures; and been the universal object of love. In a more advanced age, I have spent my time in more intellectual amusements. I have, at last, risen to favour; but I protest

to you, my dear girl, that every one of these conditions leaves in the mind a dismal vacuity." If any thing can shew the vanity of ambition, it is this letter. On the death of the King, which happened on the 2d of September, 1715, Madame Maintenon retired wholly to St. Cyr, where she spent the remainder of her days in acts of devotion.

Louis XIV. made no certain provision for her; only recommending her to the Duke of Orleans. She would accept of no more than an annual pension of 80,000 livres, which was punctually paid her till her death, which happened on the 15th of April, 1719.

The great talents of this lady entitle her to the highest place among the accomplished females of the French nation.

By securing the heart of such a Monarch as Louis XIV. during so long a period of time, and in a court the most gay and accomplished that any period of the French monarchy ever beheld; and at length in-

ducing him to marry her, although advanced into a time of life when her personal charms could have little attraction, she proved the greatness of her capacity, and the source of her mental accomplishments. Her writings, particularly her letters, are universally esteemed for their ease and spirit:—indeed, she deservedly claims the superiority in those excellencies, though in a nation where vivacity is held the most shining ornament of their writers.

If we were to examine, without partiality, the great actions which might do honour to both sexes, there would be found as many on the side of the women as ours.

I shall only add one example, which does not only characterize the goodness of heart of one woman but that of the whole sex generally; and I doubt much, if, under like circumstances, the men would give the same proof of a generous attachment.

The Emperor Conrad III. besieging Henry the Proud, Duke of Bavaria, in Reinsberg, and being upon the point of tak-

ing the city by assault, the women besought the Emperor to suffer them to retire, and to carry with them what they could: Conrad having permitted them, was very much surprized on seeing them come out carrying their husbands: the Duchess walked first, and was followed by the whole city. He was much struck with this sight, and pardoned the city and the Duke.

Let men, then, who are able to inform themselves of a great number of actions which tell much in favour of women, cease their unjust declamations against them. Is it acting with good faith to oppose the irregularities of some monsters among their sex to the noblest actions of the heroes of ours?

If men can cite Des Bruehauts, they can also reproach us with more than one Cataline: and if there are found men courageous enough to make the greatest sacrifices, the women have shewn themselfes capable of similar exertions.

Besides, it is not always by great sacrifices, nor by vigorous efforts, that persons shew themselves great. It is, perhaps, easier to strike once in their life out of the common track, than to preserve a steady firmness of soul, by constantly following one plan, and maintaining the same conduct.

There is in private life a kind of heroism to which the greater part of men pay no attention, and which frequently is more deserving our eulogiums than the greatest actions: it is to be found among many women, whose virtues, without ostentation, only make themselves noticed in the interior of their houses:—kindness for their domestics, tenderness for their relatives, and affability to all; continual foresight for a husband, who sometimes owes a part of his success to the wise counsels of a woman who is hardly known.

One of our great military characters, endued with the most brilliant qualities, would lose all the fruit of it, if the soft insinuations of a religious and tender wife

had not cured him of hauteur, and that disgusting inflexibility acquired in commanding. There is more than one great man, who, like Pericles, is indebted for a part of his merit to an Aspasia.

It is hardly to be believed how many unknown virtues there are in the sex. There is an incessant talk of the follies which make a noise, and are produced by a great shew; but the world takes no account of the thousand tranquil virtues which form the sweets of a retired life. It is in the bosom of well ordered families, rather than at balls and numerous assemblies, that we meet with women who make a mute apology for their sex: we must seek for them in our churches, and in those houses where poverty and the unhappy appear to shun the view of those who could assist them. There it is they will see the piety and benevolence of women shine forth resplendently. If there are among them some, who, bounded by a mechanical and the minutiae of devotion, do no more, if we may so say, than

pay a compliment to virtue, there are a very great number whom an enlightened religion guides far from every excess, and all superstitious zeal.

Wisdom and reason are found much more frequently united with the graces than the detractors of the sex conceive them to be. Men enchanted with beauty appear desirous of reducing women to that only; and incessantly speak to them of none other of their merits than that.

A handsome woman is, truly, as they tell them, the master-piece of Nature; but this master-piece is not finished, if something is wanting in the soul. It is on this point that the ambition of women ought to turn: when to beauty is united solid merit, it may be said, that it honours and dignifies humanity. Virtue makes a woman more lovely; beauty, in its turn, adds a new lustre to virtue, which is, in some degree, personified and rendered visible, with all its attractions, in the person of an amiable and wise woman.

CHAP. XIII.

CONCLUSION.

As our petits-maîtresses, without doubt, will not honour this work with the same attention they pay to Hoyle, I have nothing to say to them; but with respect to reasonable women, whose approbation I wish much to obtain, I beg them to forgive me if I have heightened some defects which tarnish the eclat of their sex. I know not whether men think they do honour to women by always hiding the truth from them, on which every body have their claims; but it appears as if they had invented a peculiar language to discourse with them in.

They forget that a pretty woman may be a very sensible one; they discourse upon nothing serious with her: they answer to

her questions by fooleries; and treat her like a weak innocent creature.

I have too elevated an idea of the sex to act by them after so disgusting a manner; I have not thought that they only wished to be amused; and I thought I could present them with some solid truths, which they have it in their power to urge more forcibly than it is in my power to do.

It is that which has prevented my extending farther: I leave it to the penetration of the sex to tell themselves what I have omitted to say; I have done enough, if I have been able to prove to our beauties, that their part cannot be limited to the sporting every where, at a great expense, a handsome figure, and receiving for their trouble frivolous compliments.

Endued, as well as us, with a soul and a heart, they ought to labour to enlighten the one and regulate the other.

The mind to perfect itself only requires a moderate and agreeable study, which may be ranked in the class of pleasures.

Women are born with a pliancy that renders them inexcusable, when they refuse to add this new charm to those they already possess.

With regard to the heart, although it does not always take the advice of the mind, and that it sometimes gives it laws, it is nevertheless a happy disposition for regulating her heart to have cherished useful reflections.

If a woman knows how to accustom herself to an habitual labour, which prevents her mind from wandering too much, she withdraws herself from the tumult of passions which commonly trouble the effeminate and indolent.

Every thing is to be gained by giving ourselves up to a regulated employment, which gives to pleasures more vivacity and innocence. Pleasures offer themselves in crowds to those who prepare themselves to relish them; and it, assuredly, is not from vanity that they are obtained.

All that luxury which women idolize, is but a false shew of happiness. Cross-grained minds may be satisfied with *appearing happy*; good minds seek to be so in *reality*. We are so soon, and without so much expense, when we do not follow fashionable extravagances.

A woman of good sense, who only seeks to make herself noticed by that which deserves to be so, is independent of all those trifles which cause to weak minds a joy or an affliction equally ridiculous. Exempt from those alternatives of good or bad humour, which disconcert friendship, she preserves a continual pleasing gaiety, which sets her charms off better than the most studied decorations,

It is true, there are no steps which can be taken to prevent love from entering into the heart; but it is delicate love, far different from a pernicious gallantry; a chaste love, more capable of perfecting the soul than corrupting it. This love is a kind of novitiate which leads to marriage.

As it should decide their love for life, the sex cannot pay too much attention to distinguish, among the men who pay their addresses to them, the honest man, who could make a woman happy, from the coxcomb, who could only destroy it.

Once submitted to this amiable yoke, a woman should employ every means to please a husband, who ought to find in her a love as tender as his own. She should watch with him over a family, whose education offers sensible pleasures to a well-disposed mind, but only trouble for a coquettish or frivolous woman. Then a woman is happy in herself, and beloved by all who surround her; she has nothing to fear from the poisoned arrows of calumny: a good reputation is the shadow of virtue, and always constantly follows it.

These are the steps which lead to happiness. Life is not a farce, nor a continuance of vain parade: there should be a variety of employments and pleasures suitable to different ages; it is by the good use

they make of them, that the happy disposition of the soul is acquired which they call happiness, and which some women seek, uselessly in the brilliancy of equipages, in the glare of diamonds, and from all those noisy or criminal pleasures which it is only proper they should remove themselves from. All these no more replace happiness than all the deceits of the toilet, which will not supply beauty when wanting.

It is an amiable philosophy, except from the wrinkles of austerity, which knows how to conciliate duties and pleasures. That is more suitable to the sex than the pedantic pride of our wits. Instructed by it, they will have things such as they are, not such as whims imagine them to be. They avoid those secret murmurs which strike imperceptible blows at the organs, and are so much the more dangerous for women whose organs are finer. This sobriety of heart is closely united to true honour, and constitutes the essence of wisdom: to recall the women to this point is a sure way of re-

forming the men; for there is such a correspondence between the two sexes, that what one of them wills, either in reason or folly, the other takes, in a short time, the same rout.

It would be very glorious for the fair sex, in possessing, at all times, the power of enlivening and embellishing our society, to have, also, the honour of reforming it: they are exhorted strongly to it; and we shall not be humbled in owing to them our return to reason.

THE following POEM, written by LADY MANNERS, will, probably, operate as a stimulus to my Fair Readers to retire sometimes from the busy, deceitful world, and enjoy that sweet converse with themselves and their God which can only be indulged in retirement :

ON RETURNING TO LEHENNA,

IN MAY, 1788.

WELCOME, once more my native land!
What joy to breathe the perfum'd gale,
Which as immers'd in thought I stand,
Salutes me from the hawthorn vale!

O Solitude! of mind serene,
Parent of Innocence and peace,
Preside for ever o'er this scene,
Nor, let this grateful silence cease!

I've left the gayer paths of life,
Where Reason ne'er could Pleasure find,
Where ever-restless, busy Strife,
Leaves look'd-for Happiness behind.

There flattery o'er my youthful cheek
Has spread a momentary glow ;
There vanity has made me seek
The gilded roofs of hidden woe.

There have I seen neglected Worth,
Abash'd, decline her honest head,
While Vice in gaudy robes came forth ;
By Pride and Adulation led.

There Envy steeps the poison'd dart,
To strike at Merit's open breast ;
There smooth, insinuating Art,
Deceives the wisest and the best.

The nobles who were wont to raise
To Liberty a spotless shrine,
To Av'rice now devote their days,---
For her unhallow'd garlands twine.

The gentle Virgin, who of yore
Thought Worth and Happiness the same,
Contemns what she rever'd before,
And Truth she calls an empty name.

The beauty, whom relentless Time
Has robb'd of every boasted grace,
Retains the follies of her prime,
And decks with borrow'd bloom her face.

But say, amid such scenes as these,
Can I still hope my mind was free?
Say, in this more than Cretan maze
Was I devoted still to thee?

Did ne'er Ambition swell my breast,
Or sparkle in my dazzled eye?
Did ne'er offended Pride molest
My hours, or prompt the heaving sigh?

Yes: I have felt their baneful power,
Have own'd their universal sway
Was tempted in one thoughtless hour
Their shameful dictates to obey.

But Reason rais'd my fainting soul,
Ere I the magic draught could sip;
Ere I had touch'd the Syren's bowl,
She turn'd it from my eager lip.

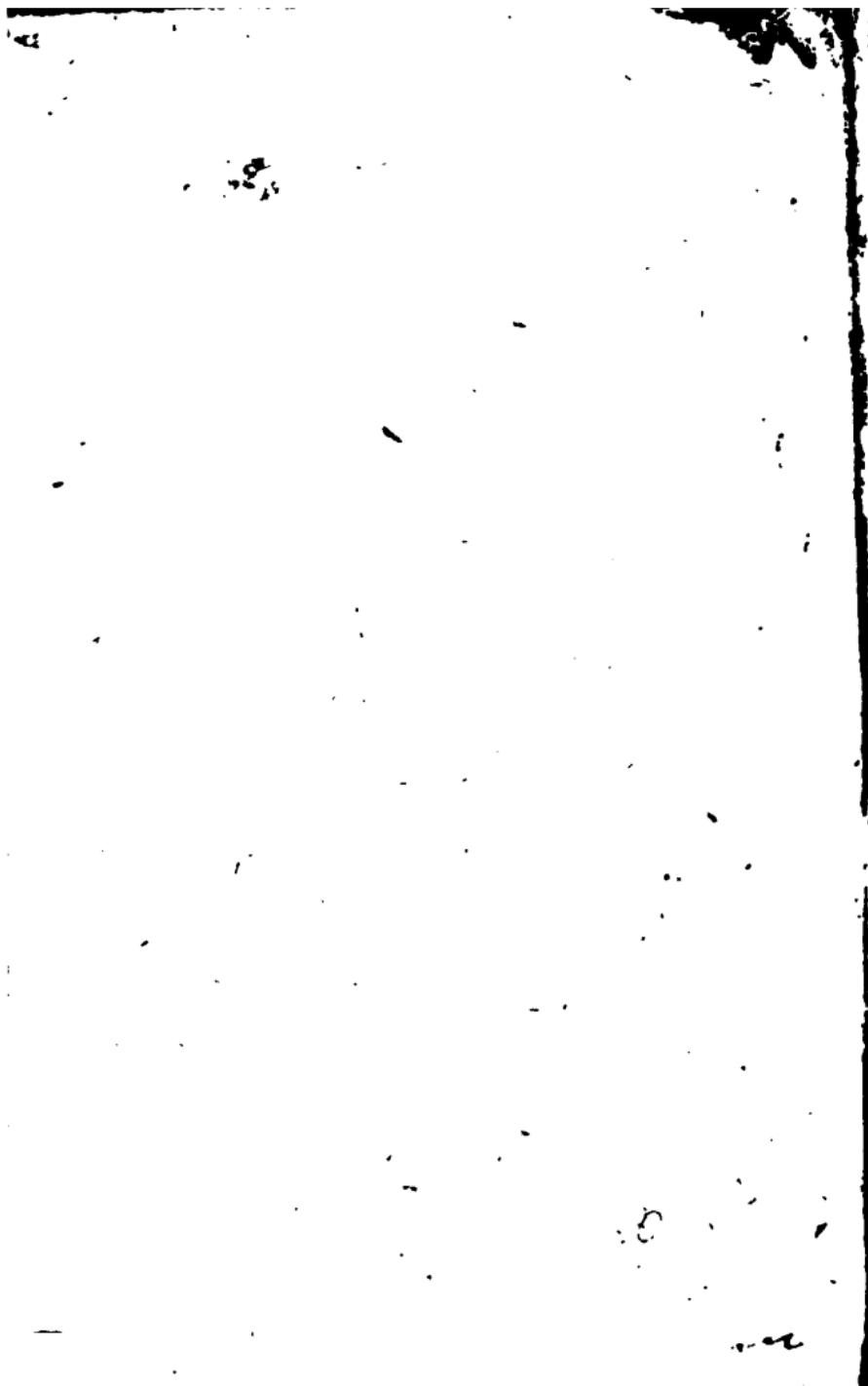
“ Amoret,” she cried, “ for ever leave
“ This scene, where Vice and Folly reign;
“ The time you've lost in crowds retrieve,
“ Nor hope for bliss but on the plain.”

With this kind counsel I complied,
No longer worldly splendor prize;
Nor shall I build my nobler pride
But on becoming good and wise.

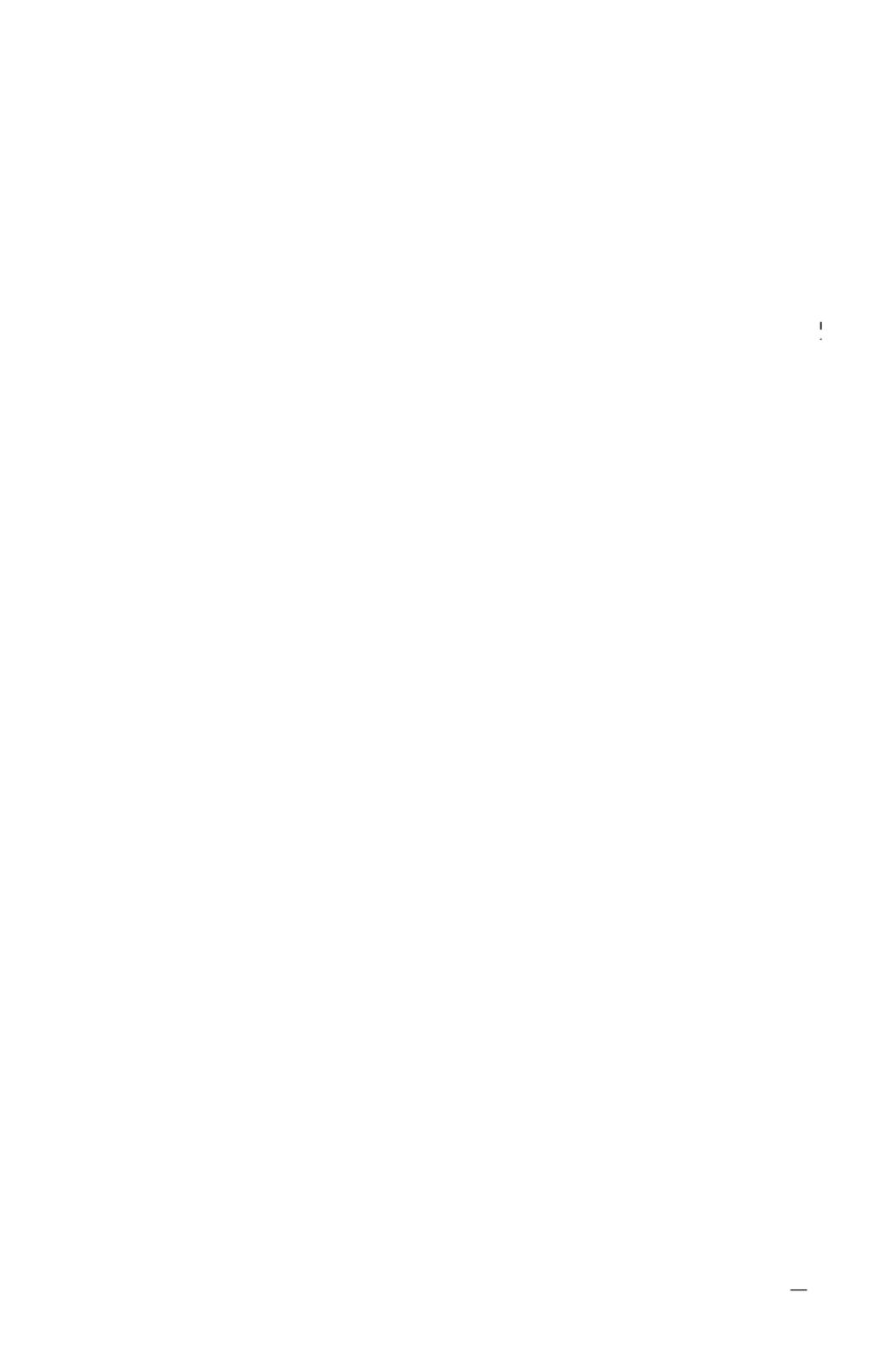
Accept, then, Solitude, my pray'r---
A wearied wanderer receive;
Strengthen'd by thee, I will prepare
By spotless virtue for the grave.

THE END.











SEP 4 - 1942



